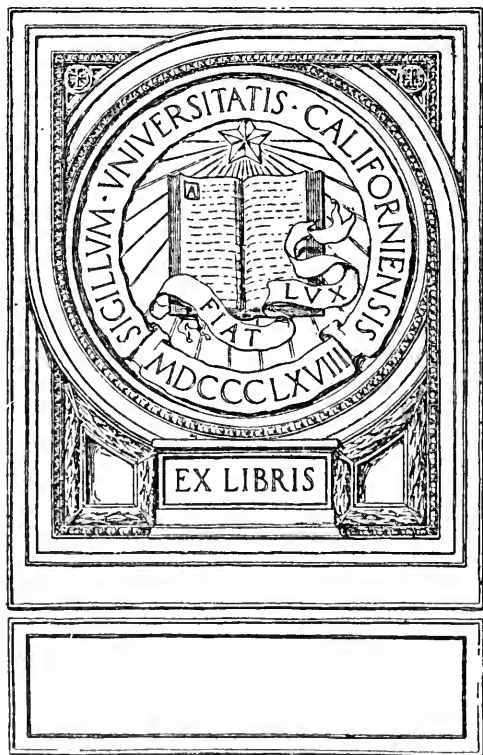


UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



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THE COLLECTED POEMS OF
DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

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OF

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
GEORGE MEREDITH



HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON MCMVII

Introduction

AN Introduction to a book wears the sad aspect of an advocate addressing a frigid jury. The foreword should be an afterword, and find its place in an appendix, if anywhere. When we have an Introduction to a volume of poems, reviewers, even modern reviewers, might take it as a plea in apology or for favour. But modern reviewers are indulgent. How great the difference between them and those of the old order is brought to my mind by a criticism in an aged *Quarterly Review* (not the *Quarterly* nor the *Edinburgh*, though they had their merits) of Coleridge's "Christabel," in which there was the quotation—

"'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way."

Upon this was the comment, "Why could not Mr. Coleridge tell us plainly that it was the month

of April?" We are in a clearer atmosphere at present, as to reviewers, whatever may be said of the poets. Nevertheless an Irishwoman writing from her heart of the legends of her country and the superstitions of the peasantry, may have her way smoothed in advance by some consideration of the Celtic mind. And she writes ballads, too, which are rather in disfavour now.

The mind of the Celt has been much discussed. It is generally taken to be overpoweringly emotional, vapourish as well, and fantastical, remote, divorced from reality. Such is the impression of it on the Saxon mind. But reality has more than one way of speaking. The rightly poetic is only another language for flat prose. Thus a fair young cousin loves a gallant lord, and he gives her a kiss on the cheek as he rides away, caring but for the chase. She vows in her heart that he shall have his wish: she swallows a potion. Red Richard sees a white doe ahead of him, and pursues her; she has the dark eyes of his cousin; day after day she flits before the exasperated hunter until at last his spear transfixes her. Returning home, he finds the corpse of his cousin, his spear buried in her breast. Prose would put it that Red Richard,

preferring the chase, like Adonis, was teased by his fair cousin's affection, and ultimately caused her death by his cruelty. Facts work on the Celtic mind in its imaginative exercise like flame of a lamp crossing the eyelids of a sleeper. Symbolism swallows Reality, but Reality is read through it, if we take the trouble.

A false rhyme may be found in this poet's ballads. There has been of late a cry for the more rigid enforcement of rhyme ; strange to hear when the many writers of verse are wearing the poor stock we have to shreds. That hard consonantal smack on the ear of an exact similarity of sound is required in what is called our heroic verse, which relies for its effect on the timely clapper. In lyrics the demand for music is imperative, and as quantity is denied to the English tongue, rhymes there must be. Unhappily the monosyllables chiefly in request are a scanty lot. Attempt to translate Heine, and our weakness in dissyllables baffles the experiment. An unrivalled instrumentalist like Mr. Swinburne, prince of lyrists, does marvels with the language. Lesser men, however correct their rhyming, betray the cramp of their hand in frequent repetitions of the rhymes. We can generally anticipate the line as well as

rhyme to come. A ballad, of which the main point is to tell a story metrically, is not bound to strictness in rhyme ; for the mind is made more attentive than the ear. Mrs. Dora Sigerson Shorter has the gift of metrical narrative. Her gentle sincerity holds her to the story. Even when her emotions are not roused, the art of compression and progression, as in "The Dean of Santiago," is shown. Among the minor pieces "The Vagrant Heart" will strike an echo in many a woman's breast. Further work, especially ballads, is to be expected from her, Irish or other. Her country supplies one of the richest of fields.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

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THE PHANTOM DEER

"Do you hunt alone to-day, O Red Richard !

Pray you tell me, do you hunt all your lone ?"

"Ay, I am for the chase, little cousin,
And wish no other spearing save my own."

"And whither are you going, O Red Richard !

That I may from the terrace watch your way ?"

"All deep within the magic woods of Toonagh,
It is there that my hunting is to-day."

He vaulted to the saddle of his palfrey,

And laid across his arm the bridle-rein ;

And he drew her to his knee, all fair and rosy,

Laughed—"A kiss, child, to bring me home again."

Then he rode on all so gay, so forgetting,

His light kiss as a flame upon her cheek ;

But she went back alone into her chamber,

There to weep like her tender heart would break.

"O my love ! though you love me not, Red Richard,

As you ride with your heart all whole and gay"—

She drew from her breast a magic potion,

Saying, "Sweet will your hunting be to-day.

"Three drops for you I drink, O Cousin Richard !

Three drops that you may have your heart's desire ;

As a white deer I shall spring the glades before you,

Right merry shall you follow till you tire."

Now came upon the pathway of Red Richard,
As he rode through the arbours of the wood,
A white doe, so beautiful and trembling
That all disarmed and wondering he stood.

“Very sweet you are and fair,” said Red Richard,
“Pretty doe, like a woman soft and white ;
I could swear yours were the dark eyes of my cousin
That gaze with the sad mystery of night.”

Then he laughed, and the deer, all quickly turning,
Sprang before him through the glades deep and green ;
Hot, he followed with his spear ever ready—
Oh, such hunting as this was never seen !

He followed her all fast by stream and valley,
He followed her all close through bog and briar ;
Thrice she lured him round the woods by his castle,
But vanished ere he had his red desire.

And he rode home all slow and heavy-hearted,
And from his weary steed he flung him down ;
There he saw on the terrace watching for him
A little maid all clad in snowy gown.

And he cried, “Come you hither, little cousin,
I swear that it was one as fair as you,
Clad in white, with her eyes as dark and splendid,
Who has fooled me so the glowing morning through.

“I promise to you, pretty,” laughed Red Richard,
“To-morrow I shall bring her to your feet” ;
Then she said, smiling low, the little cousin,
“Oh, to-morrow may your hunting be as sweet !”

When the dawn was pale and young came Red Richard
Through his castle gate into the magic wood ;
And there upon his path, aloof and trembling,
The slender doe all palpitating stood.

And he chased her then by rock and by river,
He chased her long by meadow and by hill :
Thrice she took him through the gardens of his castle,
But she vanished ere his spear had had its will.

And so home, foiled and furious, rode Red Richard ;
He flung himself all weary in his chair,
And beside him came the white little maiden,
Saying, " Cousin, was your hunting very fair ? "

Then he laughed. " But to-morrow I shall win her,
Though she go where no foot has ever been.
To your feet will I bring her, pretty cousin ;
Oh, such hunting as mine was never seen ! "

Up at dawn, glad and eager, rose Red Richard ;
The quickest steed in all the land had he,
And he rode to the magic woods of Toonagh—
There the white doe was grazing peacefully.

And then upon the tender moss behind her,
So softly and so swiftly did he ride,
Then she bounded but a pace from her resting
Ere his hot spear was red within her side.

And he tracked her through the mist and through
shadow,
He followed the wet crimson on his way ;
And he vowed he would have her dead or living,
Or follow her until the Judgment Day.

All red was the pathway to his castle,
And all eager and full fierce was his quest,
Till he came upon the corpse of his cousin—
With his sharp spear deep buried in her breast.

So it is that the magic woods of Toonagh
Are haunted by the spirit of a deer :
She wanders by the castle of Red Richard—
Within her side the wounding of a spear.

THE RAPE OF THE BARON'S WINE

WHO was stealing the Baron's wine,
Golden sherry and port so old,
Precious, I wot, as drops of gold ?
Lone to-night he came to dine,

Flung himself in his oaken chair,
Kicked the hound that whined for bread ;
"God ! the thief shall swing !" he said,
Thrust his hand through his ruffled hair.

Bolt and bar and double chain
Held secure the cellar door ;
And the watchman placed before,
Kept a faithful watch in vain.

Every day the story came,
"Master, come ! I hear it drip !"
The wine is wet on the robber's lip,
Who the robber, none could name.

All the folk in County Clare
Found a task for every day
By the Baron's gate to stray,
Came to gossip, stayed to stare.

Nothing here to satisfy
Souls for tragedy awake ;
Just the castle by the lake,
Caldest spot beneath the sky.

But the whispered story grew,
When the Baron went to dine,
That a devil shared his wine,
Had his soul in danger too.

Every morn the Baron rose
More morose and full of age ;
Passed the day in sullen rage,
Barred his gates on friends or foes.

Lone to-night he came to dine,
Struck the hound that asked a share,
Heard a step upon the stair—
“ Come, the thief is at your wine ! ”

Baron of Killowen keep
Running down the vaulted way,
To the cellar dark by day,
Took the ten steps at a leap.

There he listened with the throng
Of frightened servants at the door,
He heard the wine drip on the floor,
And sea-mew's laughter loud and long.

Of oaken beam, of bolt and chain
They freed the door, and crowded through,
Their eyes a horror claimed in vain,
Nor ghost nor devil met their view.

They searched behind the hogshead, where
The watchful spider spied and span ;
They sighed to see the wine that ran
A crimson torrent, wasting there.

They even searched the gloomy well
That legend said rose from the lake ;
They saw bright bubbles rise and break,
But nothing stranger here befell.

The Baron swore—the Baron said,
 “Now all be gone, alone I’ll stay,
 There shall not rise another day
 Without this thief, alive or dead.”

So still he stood, no sound was there,
 But wasting wine fell drop and drip ;
 Save that, the silence seemed to slip
 Its threatening fingers through his hair.

And then at last an echo flew,
 The splash of waters thrown apart ;
 He cursed the beating of his heart
 Because the thief was listening too.

The slipping scrape of scales he hears,
 And sea-mew laughter, loud and sweet ;
 He dares not move his frightened feet,
 His pulse beats with a thousand fears.

At that strange monster in the gloom
 He points his pistol quick, and fires ;
 Before the powder spark expires
 He hears a sea-bird’s scream of doom.

He saw one gleam of foam-white arms,
 Of sea-green eyes, of sloak brown hair ;
 He had a glance to find her fair,
 When he had slain her thousand charms.

.

The Baron of Killowen slew
 A strange sea-maiden, young and fair ;
 And all the folk in county Clare
 Will tell you that the tale is true.

And when the Baron came to dine,
 His guests could never understand,
 That he should say, with glass in hand,
 “I would the thief were at my wine !”

THE WOMAN WHO WENT TO HELL

AN IRISH LEGEND

YOUNG Dermod stood by his mother's side,
And he spake right stern and cold ;
" Now, why do you weep and wail," he said,
" And joy from my bride withhold ?

" And why do you keen and cry," said he,
" So loud on my marriage day ?
The wedding guests they now eager wait,
All clad in their rich array.

" The priest is ready with book and stole,
And you do this grievous thing :
You keep me back from the altar rail—
My bride from her wedding ring."

His mother she rose, and she dried her tears,
She took him by his right hand—
" The cause," she said, " of my grief and pain
Too soon must you understand.

" Oh, one-and-twenty long years ago
I walked in your father's farm,
I broke a bough from a ripe peach-tree,
And carried it on my arm.

" My heart was light as a thistle-seed—
I had but been wed a year—
I dreamt of joy that would soon be mine—
A babe in my arms so dear.

8 THE WOMAN WHO WENT TO HELL

“ There came to me there a stranger man,
And these are the words he spake :
‘ The fruit you carry I fain would buy,
I pray you my gold to take.’

“ The fruit I carried he then did buy—
You lying beneath my heart—
I tended to him the ripe peach-bough
He tore the gold branch apart.

“ He whispered then in my frightened ear
The name of the Evil One,
‘ And this have I bought to-day,’ he said—
The soul of your unborn son.

“ ‘ The fruit you carry, which I did buy,
Will ripen before I claim ;
And when the bells for his wedding ring
Again you shall hear my name.’ ”

Now Dermot rose from his mother’s side,
And all loud and long laughed he.
He bore her down to the wedding-guests,
All sorrowful still was she.

“ Now, cry no more, sweet mother,” he said,
“ For you are a doleful sight.
And who is there in the banquet-hall
Can claim my soul to-night ? ”

Then one rose up from the wedding throng,
But his face no man could see,
And he said, “ Now bid your dear farewell,
For your soul belongs to me.”

Young Dermot stood like a stricken man,
His mother she swooned away ;
But his love ran quick to the stranger’s side,
And to him she this did say :—

"If you will let his young soul go free,
I will serve you true and well,
For seven long years to be your slave
In the bitterest place of hell."

"Seven long years, if you be my slave,
I will let his soul go free."
The stranger drew her then by the hand,
And into the night went he.

Seven long years did she serve him true
By the blazing gates of hell,
And on every soul that entered in
The tears of her sorrow fell.

Seven long years did she keep the place,
To open the doors accurst,
And every soul that her tear-drops knew—
It would neither burn nor thirst.

And once she let in her father dear,
And once passed her brother through,
Once came a friend she had loved full well,
Oh, bitter it was to do !

On the last day of the seven long years
She stood by her master's knee—
"A boon, a boon for the work well done
I pray that you grant to me.

"A boon, a boon, that I carry forth
What treasure my strength can bring."
"That you may do," said the Evil One,
"And all for a little thing.

"All you can carry you may take forth
By serving me seven years more."
Bitter she wept for the world and love,
But took her sad place by the door.

Seven long years did she serve him well
 Until the last day was done,
 And all the souls that she had let in,
 They clung to her one by one.

And all the souls that she had let through
 They clung to her dress and hair,
 Until the burden that she brought forth
 Was heavy as she could bear.

The first who stopped her upon her way
 Was an angel with sword aflame,
 "The Lord has sent for your load," he said,
 "St. Michael it is my name."

The woman drew back his gown of white,
 And the cloven hoof did see.
 "Oh, God, be with me to-night," she cried,
 "For bitter my sorrows be.

"I will not give it to you," she wept,
 Quick grasping her burden tight ;
 And all the souls that surrounded her
 Clung closer in dire affright.

The next who stopped her upon her way
 Was a maid all fair to see,
 And "Sister, your load is great," she said,
 "So give it, I pray, to me."

"The Virgin, I am, God sent me forth
 That you to your love might go,"
 The woman she saw the phantom's eyes
 And paled at their fierce red glow :

"I will not give it to you," said she,
 And wept full many a tear.
 And all the souls that her burden made
 Cried out in desperate fear.

The third who met her upon her way
 Was a Man with face so fair :
 She knelt her down at his wounded feet,
 And she laid her burden there.

"Oh I will give it to You," she said,
 And fell in a swoon so deep,
 The flying souls and their cries of joy
 Did not wake her from her sleep.

Seven long days did her slumber last,
 And, oh, but her dream was sweet,
 She thought she wandered in God's far land,
 The bliss of her hopes complete !

And when she woke on the seventh day
 To her love's home did she go.
 And there she met neither man nor maid
 Who ever her face did know.

And lo ! she saw set a wedding feast,
 And tall by her own love's side
 There leaned a maiden, all young and fair,
 Who never should be his bride.

"A drink, a drink, my little page boy,
 A drink I do pray you bring."
 She took the goblet up in her hand,
 And dropped in her golden ring.

"He who would marry, my little page,
 I pray he may drink with me,
 'To the old true love he has forgot,'
 And this must his toasting be."

When her false lover had got the cup
 He drained it both deep and dry,
 "To my dead love that I mourned so long,
 I would that she now were nigh."

He took from the cup the golden ring,
 And he turned it in his hand ;
 He said, " Whoever has sent this charm
 I cannot her power withstand."

" Oh she is weary, and sad, and old,"
 The little page boy replied ;
 But Dermod strode through the startled guests,
 And stood by his own love's side.

He took her up in his two strong arms,
 And " Have you come home ?" he said,
 " Twice seven long years I mourned you well
 As silent among the dead."

He kissed her twice on her faded cheek,
 And thrice on her snow-white hair.
 " And this is my own true wife," he said
 To the guests who gathered there.

" Oh she is withered and old," they cried,
 " And her hair is pale as snow.
 'Twere better you took the fair young girl,
 And let the sad old love go."

" I will not marry the fair young girl,
 No woman I wed but this,
 The sweet white rose of her cheek," said he,
 " Shall redden beneath my kiss.

" There is no beauty in all the land
 That can with her face compare."
 He led her up to the table head,
 And set her beside him there.

MY LADY'S SLIPPER

A TRUE STORY

I

I AM a man who hath known trouble,
O'Ruarc of the Lake.
On my life's glass joy rose as a bubble
To glitter and break.

She laid in mine her hands long and slender,
So softly sweet,
Little curls on her head tasselled like tender
Gold autumn wheat.

Brown leaves around her whirling and falling,
Blown to her cheek.
I, with my heart for her loud in its calling,
Still could not speak !

Wife of my foe thus pleading before me,
There seemed no wrong :
With my mad passions that stifled and tore me
Who could be strong ?

What had she shown me there in her weeping,
On her white arm ?
Black, cruel bruises vividly keeping
Tales of alarm.

What had she begged me there in the morning,
God judge me well ?
What had she said, that I without warning
Struggled in Hell ?

"Take me and save me, be my defender,
Hide me away."
She from my old foe bid me befriend her,
How could I stay ?

Here was revenge for the old bitter wronging,
Here to my hand ;
Here was the love of my life—of my longing,
Could I withstand ?

Thrice did I turn to fly from my danger,
God judge me true,
Vowed that my love to her love was a stranger,
This did I do.

But when I looked on her, heard her calling,
Kneeling so low,
There the sun's sheen on golden locks falling,
How could I go ?

"Dearly beloved, shaken with sorrow,
Branded with blows,
Which way does honour lie ? think ! for to-morrow
Only God knows !"

One man should use her so : he in whose keeping
Broken she lay ;
One man should love her so, see her there weeping,
And turn away.

He were inhuman. Riding behind me
Home did she speed.
Which way did honour lie ? Love did so blind me,
Great was her need.

There at my door did I linger awhile
Tending my horse,
Saw her flit up the long steps, and her smile
Bore no remorse.

On her pale brow was a look of soft peace,
Upward she went ;
Never a glance in her welcome release
Backward she bent.

Red was her cloak, and her face like a flower
Dear to behold ;
Little red slippers she wore in that hour
Buckled with gold.

Up the white steps like a flash of red flame,
In through the door ;
Quick did I follow to tremble her name—
Saw her no more.

Saw her no more from that hour—she had gone,
Vanished away,
Like a bright light on my lone path that shone,
Then let me stray.

II

I had a neighbour—he was my friend,
Since in the wood
Lone our two houses were, each gable-end
United stood.

This was a manor once built for a knight
In days of old,
But with the centuries love and their fight
Squandered the gold.

So for my friend, when inheritance came
Coffers were bare,
Just the old keep and the weight of a name,
This was his share.

Then he divided the house into two—
 I took a part.
Now in my grief for his guidance I flew,
 Knowing his heart.

“At dawn he departed,” the little page said.—
 Time without end.
Oh, on what broken wings laggard hours fled !
 He was my friend.

So the years passed me and shed in their flight
 Dust and decay ;
Ruin and rust on the old manor clings,
 Crumbling away.

Only my desolate chambers remain,
 Racked by the wind ;
All down the years go I seeking in vain—
 Never to find.

Vanished my love—my friend—not a cry !
 Leaving life's race,
Like the bright meteors that slip in the sky,
 Leap into space.

III

The shadows are long, I crouch by the fire,
 Bitter with years,
See all the shades of my former desire
 Ghostly through tears.

Down the long hall to me, weary of play,
 Comes my young hound ;
At my feet, tumbled, his dusty toy lay—
 What had he found ?

There in the firelight glitter of gold,
God make me strong !
A little red slipper I tremulous hold,
Lost for so long.

So musty and faded, mouldy with years,
Where hidden and how !
Here, after searching, much passion and tears,
Come to me now.

" What is in hiding ? Oh, track me the way—
Find her, my hound ! "
Up the steep stairs he goes, eager for play,
Gambolling around.

Up to the turret room, close to the wall,
Barking he goes ;
Tears till the wainscoting crumbling falls
Under his blows.

Rotten with age, here a panel unseen
Slips 'neath my hand ;
Into the silence of love that has been,
I shuddering stand.

This is the secret hidden away,
Built in the wall—
Between the two houses a room cold and gray,
Gloomy and small.

Huddled and crumbling, stretched on the ground,
Mould and decay ;
Dust to dust mingled, the secret is found,
So here they lay.

In one embrace down the desolate years
Over my head
Did they lie smiling and know of my tears,
Cruel and dead.

Here the grey spider had circled them o'er,
Hand to hand tied,
In their clasped fingers lay hidden his store,
There, too, he spied.

I was the fool then who linked in that clasp
Each skeleton hand ;
Thus !—will I be he who loosens the grasp,
How was it planned ?

Here is a phial : was death then so sweet,
Honour or life ?
This was the only way lovers could meet—
She was a wife.

Wrapped in death's silence, safe from my scorn ;
He was my friend :
It was *his* love whom I bore home that morn,
His to the end !

Was it the woman who plotted and spied,
Using my heart
Just for a stone there to step where the tide
Kept them apart ?

Was he a coward, lying lowly to wait,
Giving me blame ?
Vain do I strike him, avenging my fate.
Cursed be his name !

She was my love : did she bid him believe
I for his sake
Cast away honour to stoop and deceive,
Bore *him* the stake ?

He was my friend : dare I doubt him and know ?
What if it be
Nothing he knew of her coming—the blow
That fell on me ?

Knowing his honour, it might be she came,
 Since he was still.
What did she care for my torture or shame?—
 I served her will.

Knowing his weakness under her eyes,
 Boldly she flew
Into his arms, hushed his blame and surprise,
 If this be true.

Speak to me once, for God's sake, till I know
 What was the worst !
My friend, my beloved, did you both plan the blow
 Made me accurst ?

Speak to me once, O dear voices, for I
 Wait to forgive !
Tell me your secret : the echoes reply—
 I alone live.

.

Only the bark of my dog in the tower,
 Glad in his play ;
“ Red was her cloak, and her face like a flower ” ;
 Hide it away !

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

It was the Black Earl Roderick
Who rode towards the south ;
The frown was heavy on his brow,
The sneer upon his mouth.

Behind him rode a hundred men
All gay with plume and spear ;
But not a one did lilt a song
His weary way to cheer.

So stern was Black Earl Roderick
Upon his wedding day,
To none spoke he a single word
Who met him on his way.

And when he reached the castle old,
Wherein his bride did wait,
He blew three blasts upon the horn
That hung beside the gate.

" Now who be you who blow so strong,
And all so gaily ride ? "

" It is the Black Earl Roderick
Who comes to claim his bride. "

" Come in, come in, Earl Roderick,
Come in, the hour is late ;
The priest is ready in his stole,
The wedding guests await. "

And then the stern Earl Roderick
From his fierce steed came down ;
The sneer still curled upon his lip,
His eyes still held the frown.

He strode right haughtily and quick
Into the banquet hall,
And stood among the wedding guests,
The greatest of them all.

He gave scant greeting to the throng,
He waved the guests aside ;
“ Now haste, for I, Earl Roderick,
Will wait long for no bride.

“ And I must in the saddle be
Before the night is grey ;
So, quickly with the marriage lines,
And let us ride away.”

While spoke the great Earl Roderick
There came into the hall
His little bride, all trembling,
As though she soon must fall.

Her mother held her snow-white hand
And wept most bitterly ;
She whispered, “ If I had my will
This thing should never be.”

Her father muttered in his beard,
“ Thus do the clans unite ;
Yet were there other way, I vow,
This troth they should not plight.”

And when the two were wedded one,
He raised his hand and said,
“ This is the link that binds the clans ;
God's blessing on her head.”

But now the stern Earl Roderick
His presence did deny ;
He mounted on his fretting steed
With but a scant goodbye.

His bride he set before him there,
And rode upon his way,
And all his sullen men at arms
With wedding favours gay.

And to his weary little bride
He spoke no gentle word ;
She fluttered, weeping on his breast,
Like to some wounded bird.

For in his heart the gloomy Earl
Had spoke a bitter thing :
"Oh, 'tis not on your hand I love
To see my golden ring.

"I, wedding thus the stranger child,
Keep the clans united,
But set my own true love aside,—
Broke the troth I plighted."

.

It chanced when Black Earl Roderick
Had but been wed a year,
There came to him a serving-lass,
Within her eye a tear.

"Alas," she said "Earl Roderick,
'Tis well that you should know
That each grey eve, lone wandering,
My mistress dear doth go.

"She comes with sorrow in her eyes
Home in the dawning light.
My Lord, she is too weak and young
To travel in the night."

Now stern grew Black Earl Roderick,
But answered not at all ;
He took his hunting harness down
That hung upon the wall.

And quickly went he to the chase,
And slowly came he back,
And there he met his old sweetheart,
Who stood across his track,

And, "Oh, proud Earl Roderick,"
She said, "I bring to you
A tale to bow your haughty head—
Your mistress is untrue.

"She goes alone each night, they say,
And mounts Hy-brasil hill,
And there she lingers with her love
Until the dawn comes chill."

At this the stern Earl Roderick
Grew paler than the dead,
And bowed upon his heaving breast
His proud and angry head.

"Till now," he cried, "no stain has come
Upon my honoured name.
Lord, pity me, that in my time
Should rise the flush of shame."

He struck the gold spur in his steed,
The wind behind him wailed ;
He drove the beast through stream and briar
Until its strength nigh failed.

And when he reached Hy-brasil hill
He searched it high and low,
But ne'er a sight of his lost bride
Did all his seeking show.

But there he met an ancient crone,
To whom he spake his mind—
“And have you seen my lady here,
For her I cannot find?”

“I have not seen your lady here,”
The withered dame replied;
“But I have met a little lass,
Who wrung her hands and cried.

“She was not clad in silken robe,
Nor rode a palfrey white;
She had no maidens in her train,
Behind her rode no knight.

“But she crept weary up yon hill,
And crouched upon the sord,
I dare not think that she could be
Spouse to so great a Lord.”

Now darkly frowned Earl Roderick,
He turned his face away;
And shame and anger in his heart
Disturbed him with their sway,

For he had never cared to know
What his young bride would wear;
He gave her neither horse, nor hound,
Nor jewels for her hair.

“And whither went this little lass,
And who was by her side?
I vow his blood shall drench my blade,
And that before my bride.”

“There was no lover by her side;
She went sad and alone,
And when she reached the green hilltop
She there did make her moan.

"And once her father's name she'd cry,
And twice her mother's call,
And thrice on Black Earl Roderick
Who loved her not at all.

"And every night she came and wept,
So long upon the hill,
And watched the lights in her lost home
Until the dawn grew chill."

"What did you tell to her, old witch,
When weeping she passed by?"
"I took her pretty hand in mine
And bid her not to cry.

"I traced upon her slender palm
That luck was changing soon ;
I swore that peace would come to her
Before another moon.

"I said that he who loved her well
Would robe her all in silk,
And bear her in a coach of gold
With palfreys white as milk.

"I told, before three suns had set
He'd kneel down by her side,
That he she loved would love her well
And she would be his bride."

Now pallid grew Earl Roderick ;
He turned his charger home ;
Vowed in a tower he'd lock his bride,
So she no more could roam.

But when he reached the castle grey
He searched both high and low :
But none had seen his pale lady,
And none had seen her go.

There came to him a serving-maid,
And in her eye a tear :
" Oh, what has happened in the night ?
A banshee I did hear ! "

There came to him his sister grey,
And stern was her set face :
" A curse upon the wandering feet
That bring our house disgrace ! "

But still the proud Earl Roderick
No answer did he make,
But locked his grief within his heart
Until it seemed to break.

He went into his own chamber,
And crouched within his chair,
And lo ! when he did raise his head,
Behold ! his bride was there !

She stood beside the open door,
Her sad eyes on his face ;
But when he sprang to reach her side
He found but empty space.

He mounted up the marble stair
And went her chamber through,
And there he met a serving-lass
With face of deathly hue :

" Oh, I have seen a white ghost walk,
With dim eyes of the dead !
She wrung her hands most piteously
And wept at your bed-head. "

All silent Black Earl Roderick
Went to his room away,
All angry with his throbbing heart
And fitful fancies' play.

He sat him by the bright hearthside
And turned towards the door ;
And there upon the threshold stood
His lady, weeping sore.

He chased her down the winding stair
And out into the night ;
But only found a withered crone,
With long hair, loose and white.

"Come hither now, you sly-faced witch ;
Come hither now to me.
Say, if a lady all so pale
Your evil eyes did see ?"

"Oh, true, I saw a little lass,
She went all white as snow ;
She crossed my hand with silver crown
Just two short hours ago."

"What did you tell the foolish wench—
Who must my lady be ?
The false tale you did tell to her
You now must tell to me."

"I hate you, Black Earl Roderick ;
You're cruel, hard, and cold ;
Yet shall you grieve like a young child
Before the moon is old.

"This did I tell her : like a queen
She'd ride into the town ;
And ev'ry man who met her there
Would on his knees go down.

"I said that he who followed none
Would walk behind her now,
And in his trembling hands the helm
From his uncovered brow.

“ And he should walk, while she would ride,
Through all the town away ;
And greater than Earl Roderick
She would become that day.”

Now scornful laughed Earl Roderick :
“ I vow this could not be ;
There is no lady in the land
Could make a slave of me.

“ There has no woman yet been born
Who could more great become :
So get you hence, you evil hag,
Your tale grows wearisome.”

And home went Black Earl Roderick,
Right angry was he now ;
He sat before the dying fire,
A frown was on his brow.

He looked across the empty room,
And once he saw again
His lady on the threshold stand,
With face of grievous pain.

“ Come here, come here, my sad-faced bride ;
Why do you come and go ?
There is a question I must ask,
An answer I must know.”

Oh, stern was Black Earl Roderick,
He called her by her name ;
But from the threshold of the room
She neither spoke nor came.

Now rose up Black Earl Roderick,
And strode the chamber through,
And said, “ If you come not to me,
I fain must come to you.”

He followed her down hall and stair,
Out through the open door ;
And every weary mile he went
The lady was before.

Through sleepy woods and singing streams
He followed all the night :
But never did he reach her side,
Or stopped she from her flight,

Until she reached Hy-brasil hill,
And by Hy-brasil lake,
And there she vanished from his eyes
Ere he could overtake.

He looked into the deep wood green,
But nothing there did see ;
He looked into the still water,
Beneath, all white, lay she.

He drew her from her cold, cold bed,
And kissed her cheek and chin ;
Loosed from his neck his silken cloak
To wrap her body in.

He took her up in his two arms—
His grief was deep and wild ;
He knelt beside her on the sod
And sorrowed like a child.

He blew three blasts upon his horn,
His men did make reply,
And came all quickly to his call
Through brake and briar so high.

They raised her up upon their shields,
Clad in her cloak of silk ;
Home brought her in a coach of gold
With palfreys white as milk.

EARL RODERICK'S BRIDE

And every man who saw her there
Went down upon his knee ;
Behind her came Earl Roderick,
All pitiful to see,

And in his trembling hands the helm
From his uncovered brow ;
And " Oh," he said, " to love her well,
And know it only now !"

And he did walk, while she did ride,
Through all the town away ;
For greater than Earl Roderick
She did become that day.

DONACHA RUA

DONACHA RUA of Donegal,
(Holy Mary, how slow the dawn !)
This is the hour of your loss or gain :
*Is go d-tigeadh tu mo mhúirín slán !*¹

Donacha rua, but the hour was ill
(O Mary Mother, how high the price !)
When you swore you'd game with Death himself ;
Ay, and win with the devil's dice.

Donacha rua, you must play with Death
(Mary, watch with him till the light !)
Through the dark hours, for the words you said,
All this strange and noisy night.

Donacha rua, you are pale and cold ;
(How the demons laugh through the air !)
The anguish beads on your frowning brow ;
Mary set on your lips a prayer !

Donacha rua, you have won the toss :
(Mother, pray for his soul's release !)
Shuffle and deal ere the black cock crows,
That your spirit may find its peace.

Donacha rua, you have played a king ;
(How strange a light on your fingers fall !)
A voice, " I was cold, and he sheltered me . . ."
The trick is gained, but your chance is small.

¹ " May you, my darling, come safely ! "

Donacha rua, now an ace is yours ;
(Mother Mary, the night is long !)
“ I was a sin that he hurried aside . . . ”
O for the dawn and the blackbird's song !

Donacha rua, now a ten of suit ;
(Mother Mary, what hot winds blow !)
“ Nine little lives hath he saved in his path . . . ”
And the black cock that does not crow.

Donacha rua, you have played a knave ;
(O what strange gates on their hinges groan !)
“ I was a friend who had wrought him ill ;
When I had fallen he cast no stone . . . ”

Donacha rua, now a queen has won !
(The black cock crows with the flash of dawn.)
And she is the woman who prays for you :
“ *Is go d-tigeadh tu mo mhúirín slán !* ”

THE FAIRY CHANGELING

BRIAN O'BYRNE of Omah town
In his garden strode up and down ;
He pulled his beard, and he beat his breast ;
And this is his trouble and woe confessed :

"The good-folk came in the night, and they
Have stolen my bonny wean away ;
Have put in his place a changeling,
A weashy, weakly, wizen thing !

"From the speckled hen nine eggs I stole,
And lighting a fire of a glowing coal,
I fried the shells, and I spilt the yolk ;
But never a word the stranger spoke.

"A bar of metal I heated red
To frighten the fairy from its bed,
To put in the place of this fretting wean
My own bright beautiful boy again.

"But my wife had hidden it in her arms,
And cried 'For shame !' on my fairy charms ;
She sobs, with the strange child on her breast :
'I love the weak, wee babe the best !'"

To Brian O'Byrne's, the tale to hear,
The neighbours came from far and near :
Outside his gate, in the long boreen,
They crossed themselves, and said between

Their muttered prayers, " He has no luck !
For sure the woman is fairy-struck,
To leave her child a fairy guest,
And love the weak, wee wean the best ! "

THE FAIR LITTLE MAIDEN

“THERE is one at the door, Wolfe O'Driscoll,
At the door, who bids you to come !”

“Who is he that wakes me in the darkness,
Calling when all the world is dumb ?”

“Six horses has he to his carriage,
Six horses blacker than the night,
And their twelve red eyes in the shadows—
Twelve lamps he carries for his light ;

“His coach is a herse black and mouldy,
Within a coffin open wide :
He asks for your soul, Wolfe O'Driscoll,
Who doth call at the door outside.”

“Who let him thro' the gates of my gardens,
Where stronger bolts have never been ?”

“The father of the fair little maiden
You drove to her grave deep and green.”

“And who let him pass through the courtyard,
Loosening the bar and the chain ?”

“Who but the brother of the maiden
Who lies in the cold and the rain !”

“Then who drew the bolts at the portal,
And into my house bade him go ?”

“The mother of the poor young maiden
Who lies in her youth all so low.”

“ Who stands, that he dare not enter,
The door of my chamber, between ? ”
“ O, the ghost of the fair little maiden
Who lies in the churchyard green.”

SWEET MARIE

You were very fair to meet once, Marie,
With your eyes like some blue hiding flower,
Now where the sun would ever seem to be,
Now glowing purple through a diamond shower.

But it was the wonder hair that you had,
With its strange changing colours, gold and red,
Now brown, now amber—guessing drove men mad,
All for the sudden sight of your young head.

Once down amongst the vine-fields stood a youth,
Sweet singing of its auburn, till arose
A fool to match him, swore it was, in truth,
Gold of all gold, until they fell to blows.

Oh ! red gold of the sun it was to me,
The very sun itself ; indeed, the day,
Lost all its light when you I might not see,
Shone at the gloaming if you chanced my way.

But yet you passed us by and had no smile,
For all our foolish loving, nor a look
To check our thieving glances—chide our guile,
That made us linger on the path you took.

Like some proud queen you went thus treasure
crowned,
Quick bearing, well we knew, all your sweet gold
To one who was beloved, there, loose unbound,
The yellow wealth lay ready to his hold.

Cursed be he ; did he kiss, then, tress by tress,
And so beneath the hiding glory seek
Those smiling lips, that only spoke to bless
All I did curse, in accents low and meek.

Fate has such ways of laying plan and plot,
And heart to heart that are not over wise,
Why did you choose a braggart and a sot
From those who loved you, held you as a prize ?

Did my deep curses fall ? For stricken he
Found death's black gate, and waited while you prayed
All the great saints of Heaven kind to be,
Thus bargained for his life, all undismayed.

As once beside a wayside shrine I hid
And saw you coming, trembled at your tear,
I read your anguish 'neath each swollen lid,
So raised from eyes that could not hide their fear.

There, from her niche, the Virgin, gazing down,
Appeared to watch you as you loosed your hair.
And oh the glory of that red and brown,
All the fair sunlight seemed entangled there !

" Sweet Mother, for his life I, tress for tress,
Shall cut this beauty which God gave to me,
Wilt thou my pleading hearken to and bless,
And pray thy Son to grant this boon to me."

You raised your eyes expectant, and I, too,
Gazed at the carven face until it seemed
The figure smiled, and then it forward threw
Its head to bowing, this—unless I dreamed.

But, Marie, lock by lock you flung your hair
Upon the knife that seemed to pierce my heart,
At each slow-parting strand I cried " Beware,"
And looked for blood upon the tress apart.

You laughed upon me, " Did you see her bow ?
My boon is granted, he shall live, shall live ! "
Before the Virgin low you bent your brow,
" Behold, sweet Mother, all my gold I give."

" And this must die,"—I kissed each tangled lock,
Laid it in sorrow on the altar stone—
" That he may live "—your laughter came to mock
The evil hope that held my heart its own.

And then you left me smiling in your glee.
I stood before the Virgin eye to eye,
" What, jealous of her hair ! " I cried. But she
Stiff, painted, wooden, did not heed my cry.

But who would say the Virgin was not wise
To weigh the value of men's love with this
Gold heap of hair ? For scarcely were my cries
Of anger over than your voice of bliss

Came backward to me, " He is whole again,
And walks toward me, hold me lest I fall,"
And so with lowered eyes of grief and pain,
With giving hands I offered him my all.

But this shorn lamb had no soft tempered wind
To bless her sacrifice and bid her live,
For sudden laughter, scorn, and jeers unkind
Were all the welcome that your love did give.

Stricken we stood a moment, facing him,
And the false woman leaning to his side,
With her stiff pointing finger, and her dim
Hard eyes upon us. Laughing now they cried :

" You once were very fair and sweet, Marie,
With all your wonder locks of gold and red,
Now brown, now amber : men went mad to see
The endless glory of your shining head."

All still you stood a moment with your eyes
Fixed on him for some mercy, but his face
Half turned in scorning ; so, like one who dies,
You moaned, and ran to hide in your disgrace.

And I had struck him, but he fell to tears,
And loud lamenting, crying, " Oh, the gold
That was my life. O death-inflicting shears,
To rob the perfumed locks I loved to hold !"

I spurned him, told the sacrifice, and bid
Him go and seek you, praying you forgive,
But he with laughter scorned me as I chid,
" I'll seek some other tresses, so I live."

I struck him then, for I was sick, in truth,
Of my long hatred ; he went down to lie
Beside his dog, who was the nobler brute,
And wept that he was slain and soon to die.

THE DEAN OF SANTIAGO

THE Dean of Santiago on his mule
Rode quick the Guadalquivir banks along,
He had no eye the veiling eve to love,
No ear to listen for the bird's late song.

Gold mist and purple of the setting sun,
Rose lapping wave and linnet's low good-night,
The crags that sat the hills like kings enthroned,
All heather-crowned, for him had no delight.

His roaming glances go from east to west,
Climb quick before him, find amid the rocks
A hut ; he hastens, casting free his mule,
And with no gentle hand the door he knocks.

"Now who would enter?" "I, the Dean, let pass."
He sees the tenant working at his books,
"And what can I, a student, poor, remote,
Do for the Dean?" he answers to his looks.

"Teach me your magic, so I learn to slave
The hiding creatures from the circling air
And bid them speak. Blow from the crystal globe
The mists that hold my future clouded there."

"What? Share my magic! But it were not well:
The Church such study doth denounce and shun."
The Dean with some rebuke now makes reply,
"My law I own in this—let it be done."

"Then you must eat before the task is set :
 Well, when you finish ; since you eager are
 We should begin. Nay, this I do insist,
 For you are weary, having travelled far.

"Hussein !" — he bids the servant by his side —
 "Go tell the cook a guest with me will dine ;
 And let two capons be prepared by him,
 And two gold cups of my most famous wine.

"Tie up the straying mule. And now begone ;
 The Dean within an hour will dine with me."
 The servant goes, and lets the curtain fall,
 And darkness folds the room in mystery.

Soft wings brush past the Dean, strange sounds float up,
 Like tongues that have no words, through the still air.
 "What say you ?" leans the Dean with eager ears
 And grasping hands that find no substance there.

"What are you ?" But the magic mist is gone,
 Hussein has entered, and the light let through.
 "A message for the Dean." He reads in haste,
"The Bishop being dead, we send for you."

The Dean arises full of pompous pride :
 "If I am Bishop, I shall not forget
 My student-teacher, and shall bid you come
 To teach that lore I leave with much regret."

.

A month has passed—the Bishop in his room
 Receives the student bowing at his feet,
 With some delight, and says he has prepared
 A secret chamber where they can repeat

Their former study, and so follow it.
 The student, smiling gratitude, doth speak,
 "I beg a boon of you," and hears reply,
 "I make a promise, and I never break.

"The boon is yours." The student bows again :

"I have a son, a gentle youth and good,
Who seeks the Church." The Bishop lifts his eyes,

"To him I hold the hand of brotherhood.

"Soon I shall call him, but to-day my time
Is thick with thought, because a rumour came
The great Archbishop at the door of Death
Doth knock—the air is heavy with my name."

.

A year goes by, and the Archbishop wakes,
Springs from his bed, and "Hussein, you!" he
cries,

To find strange eyes upon him. Bows the Moor,
"My master waits your message," he replies.

"Then bid him enter, take up his abode
Within my Palace, wait until I come.
To-day my mind is busy with such things
That bid me to all other thoughts be dumb.

"Go, tell your master, he will understand,
The Cardinal is dying. What! His son
Begs for a hope! What better hope than this—
The Cardinal is dying?—I have done."

.

The Cardinal upon his throne reclines,
And at his feet the student, bowing low,
"A boon, my lord, a boon—let me begone.
Back to my solitude I fain would go.

"Here comes the world between me and my art,
My soul is weary and my body ill,
My study broken, and my time misspent ;
You have forgotten what was once your will."

"Nay, friend," the other cries, "you are unjust ;
My heart is with you, and I pray you stay
Until my mind breaks from the bonds of care
That hold it now—a little more delay.

"Have you not heard the rumour that goes forth—
The Pope is dying ? Who shall fill his chair
When he has passed all sainted to the grave ?
Peace, friend, until the occupant is there."

The Pope within his chamber, deep in thought,
Hears at his door a knock, and saying, "Come,"
The student bends before him with reproach,
"From all my knowledge you have picked no crumb.

"O Holiness ! we had no feast of lore,
But fortune came to you beneath my star,
Then let me go, since me you do not wish,
Now you are greater than all others are."

"Old man," the Pope replied, "I let you go
In pity of your age and fading hair,
Whom I should prison in my dungeon deep
For all the evil magic you did dare

"Reveal to me, who only sought your side
To find your wickedness and give it light.
Go back into your wilderness, but leave
Your ways of darkness. Get you from my sight."

"O Holiness," the student bent and said,
"My son for whom you promised of your aid" ;
"Begone !" the Pope replied ; "think not I should
By son of you the Christian Church degrade."

"I go, great Holiness, without a fee
For all my time ; now but one boon I hold ;
To break my fast, I hunger as I go—
Give me one meal, the way is long and cold."

Now spake the Pope in anger, struck the bell,

“ I call my guards to put this beggar out.”

The door swings open, Hussein enters quick,

“ What, you again ? ”—he rises in his doubt.

He gazes round, his Palace slips away,

A shadow-palace floating from his eyes.

“ What ho ! my guards,” his voice falls into tears,

He rubs his lids to rid them of surprise.

“ Hussein,” the student smiles, “ go tell the cook

One capon only, and one cup of wine,

And bring this ingrate’s mule beside the door—

The Dean of Santiago will not dine.”

THE BEGGAR MAID

ALL on a golden morning the beggar maid did go
To gather branch and berry, the hazel-nut and sloe.
And as she went a-singing, a gipsy woman came
Beneath a bower of branches—a grey and withered
dame.

“Your fortune, pretty lady, I pray you stop and hear,
I tell of one who loves you, of child you will hold dear.
Cross you my palm with silver, for in your hand I see
That gold shall lie full often, so pity give to me.”

The beggar child made answer in laughter low and gay
“Alack, you have mistaken, good mother, hie away ;
I am no high-born lady, my fortune soon is told.
I wed some roaming fellow who hath nor land nor gold.

“My son—if God should bless me—a-seeking too must
go—

To gather branch and berry, the hazel-nut and sloe.”
Then spake the gipsy woman and took her brown
young hand,

“Nay, you shall reign hereafter as queen of all the land.

“For see—the splendid future—that whispers of a
throne—

And here the happy heart-line that owns one love
alone.”

“Good mother,” said the maiden, “that love make true
to be,

And I resign the kingdom—yet never owned by me.”

"My daughter," said the gipsy, "he'll clothe you all in
white,
And set you for your riding a palfrey black as night ;
Upon your hair so yellow, a jewelled crown shall shine,
And gold shall be your wine cup and ruby red your
wine."

"My throne it is the mountain, my wine the running
streams,
Such things as power and glory are only sweet in
dreams ;
Good mother," said the maiden, "I pray you let me go,
For I must gather brambles, the berry and the sloe."

"You meet me but with laughter, a beggar maid am I,
Who have no greater kingdom than bird that wings
the sky ;
But like him I go singing who have no wealth to care :
None comes her way to envy whose treasure-house is
bare."

And as she spoke a horn blast came ringing through
the wood,
She raised her leafy burden—a timid moment stood ;
"Hush, 'tis the King Cophetua, a-hunting he doth go—
And I must gather berries, the hazel-nut and sloe."

JEANNE BRAS

A BALLAD OF SORROW

"JEANNE BRAS ! Jeanne Bras ! arise and let me in ;
Jeanne Bras ! Jeanne Bras ! will you awake ?"
"*Now who comes so late at my door, her way to win,
Who knocks thus my slumbering to break ?*"

"Oh ! it is your child who is ill with bitter woe !
So open to her the bolted door."
"*I had a child, but she left me long ago :
I pray you to trouble me no more.*"

"Oh ! one stands here—she is weary unto death,
Beaten with the wind and with the rain."
"*The child I bore I shall curse with dying breath,
And so your knocking is in vain.*"

"Your child is here, with her bowed and humbled head
Grown grey while yet its years are green."
"*My child had hair gold as a silkworm's thread,
She held it as high as a queen.*"

"One cries here, and her lips, so sad and white,
Still call you in a daughter's name."
"*My child's mouth bore a smile of fond delight ;
It never had pleaded of shame.*"

"One weeps here : in her eyes all joy is stilled,
And she on her mother doth cry."
"*My child's eyes with God's innocence were filled,
And pure with the blue of His sky.*"

"Here is your child ; her weak and weary feet
Led her home to her own mother's door."

"*My child stole from my side all gladly fleet ;
I tell you to trouble me no more.*"

"O mother, mother ! a little babe I bring ;
I pray you rise and let us through."

"*On my child's hand was set no wedding-ring ;
I shall not open unto you.*"

"Oh, cruel you are ! Unforgiving to your child :
Sorrow and shame make her appeal."

"*Did she think of me when a stranger came and smiled ?
She went like a dog to his heel !*"

"A priest ! a priest, I pray you bring to me ;
Unchurched and unshriven am I."

"*As you went, you shall go, unblest to be,
Why do you linger here to cry ?*"

"A priest ! A priest ! My little dying boy !
Unchristened and unholy he lies."

"*Accurst be your sorrow, accurst was your joy—
Begone ! I will answer not your cries.*"

.

Jeanne Bras, Jeanne Bras, she rose up with the dawn,
And flung off the bolt and the chain :
The first thing she rested her hot eyes upon
Was the child who had called her in vain.

The next thing she saw was the babe, all so white,
Lying cold on its cold mother's breast.
Each face bore the tears of its pitiful plight—
They lay in their sleeping unblest.

Jeanne Bras, Jeanne Bras, she laid them side by side,
All in their cold and silent bed ;
Then she knelt by their grave, and bitterly she cried
Till the stars trembled forth overhead.

Now they lay all so cold and they lay all so still
Till the night of the third long day ;
Then they rose in their grave-clothes, all stiff and all
chill,
And back to her door made their way.

“ Jeanne Bras ! Jeanne Bras ! arise and let us through ;
Jeanne Bras ! Jeanne Bras ! will you awake ? ”
“ *Oh glad, sweet ghost, will I free my door to you,
And pray your forgiveness to take !* ”

Jeanne Bras arose, and she lit her taper bright,
And her door she did set open wide :
She heard a young child go crying in the night,
But never a one was outside.

She prayed till dawn, and wept the lone, long day,
Weary she laid her down to rest ;
There came to her door a ghost all pale and grey,
A babe lying cold on her breast.

“ Jeanne Bras ! Jeanne Bras ! give shelter ! Oh, awake !
Chill we are, and bitter is our woe.”
“ *O child, dear child, your mother's heart doth break,
While cold and unsheltered you go !* ”

She rose up straight, and bright her taper shone
As she opened the door so wide ;
But alas ! to her grief, the woful ghost had gone,
And never a one was outside.

Jeanne Bras, so pale, she mounted up her stair,
And no tear did she now let fall ;
But she laid her down on her pallet hard and bare,
And her white face she turned to the wall.

She lay there all night, she lay the day through,
And never a word spoke she,
Till there came with the dark a sad weeping she knew
The cry of her daughter to be.

She tossed to the left, she tossed to the right,
The sound could not stifle nor still ;
She heard the loud wail of a woman's sad plight,
And a babe in its agony shrill.

Again she rose up with her taper aflame,
And the great door all soon she unbarred ;
She called through the night on her lost daughter's
name,
Slow she went to the ancient churchyard.

Feeble she was and all old with her years,
By her child's grave she bent her white head ;
And her poor heart it broke with the burden of tears,
And she lay there as cold as the dead.

.

Her ghost it still walks through the dark hours of night,
She sighs with the grief of the wind ;
She holds in her hand a wax taper all white ;
She seeks what she never will find.

THE WHITE WITCH

HEAVEN help your home to-night,
M'Cormac, for I know
A white witch woman is your bride :
You married for your woe.

You thought her but a simple maid
That roamed the mountain-side ;
She put the witch's glance on you,
And so became your bride.

But I have watched her close and long
And know her all too well ;
I never churned before her glance
But evil luck befell.

Last week the cow beneath my hand
Gave out no milk at all ;
I turned, and saw the pale-haired girl
Lean laughing by the wall.

"A little sup," she cried, "for me ;
The day is hot and dry."
"Begone !" I said, "you witch's child,"
She laughed a loud goodbye.

And when the butter in the churn
Will never rise, I see
Beside the door the white witch girl
Has got her eyes on me.

At dawn to-day I met her out
Upon the mountain-side,
And all her slender finger-tips
Were each a crimson dyed.

Now I had gone to seek a lamb
The darkness sent astray :
Sore for a lamb the dawning winds
And sharp-beaked birds of prey.

But when I saw the white witch maid
With blood upon her gown,
I said, " I'm poorer by a lamb ;
The witch has dragged it down."

And, " Why is this, your hands so red
All in the early day ? "
I seized her by the shoulder fair,
She pulled herself away.

" It is the raddle on my hands,
The raddle all so red,
For I have marked M'Cormac's sheep
And little lambs," she said.

" And what is this upon your mouth
And on your cheek so white ? "
" Oh, it is but the berries' stain " ;
She trembled in her fright.

" I swear it is no berries' stain,
Nor raddle all so red " ;
I laid my hands about her throat,
She shook me off, and fled.

I had not gone to follow her
A step upon the way,
When came I to my own lost lamb,
That dead and bloody lay.

"Come back," I cried, "you witch's child,
Come back and answer me " ;
But no maid on the mountain-side
Could ever my eyes see.

I looked into the glowing east,
I looked into the south,
But did not see the slim young witch,
With crimson on her mouth.

Now, though I looked both well and long,
And saw no woman there,
Out from the bushes by my side
There crept a snow-white hare.

With knife in hand I followed it
By ditch, by bog, by hill :
I said, " Your luck be in your feet,
For I shall do you ill."

I said, " Come, be you fox or hare,
Or be you mountain maid,
I'll cut the witch's heart from you,
For mischief you have made."

She laid her spells upon my path,
The brambles held and tore,
The pebbles slipped beneath my feet,
The briars wounded sore.

And then she vanished from my eyes
Beside M'Cormac's farm,
I ran to catch her in the house
And keep the man from harm.

She stood with him beside the fire,
And when she saw my knife,
She flung herself upon his breast
And prayed he'd save her life.

"The woman is a witch," I cried,
"So cast her off from you";
"She'll be my wife to-day," he said,
"Be careful what you do!"

"The woman is a witch," I said;
He laughed both loud and long:
She laid her arms about his neck,
Her laugh was like a song.

"The woman is a witch," he mocked,
And laughed both long and loud;
She bent her head upon his breast,
Her hair was like a cloud.

I said, "See blood upon her mouth
And on each finger-tip!"
He said, "I see a pretty maid,
A rose upon her lip."

He took her slender hand in his
To kiss the stain away—
Oh, well she cast her spell on him,
What could I do but pray?

"May Heaven guard your house to-night!"
I whisper as I go,
"For you have won a witch for bride,
And married for your woe."

THE FETCH

"WHAT makes you so late at the trysting?
What caused you so long to be?
For a weary time I have waited
From the hour you promised me."

"I would I were here by your side, love,
Full many an hour ago,
For a thing I passed on the roadway
All mournful and so slow."

"And what have you passed on the roadside
That kept you so long and late?"
"It is weary the time behind me
Since I left my father's gate."

"As I hastened on in the gloaming
By the road to you to-night,
There I saw the corpse of a young maid
All clad in a shroud of white."

"And was she some comrade cherished,
Or was she a sister dead,
That you left thus your own beloved
Till the trysting-hour had fled?"

"Oh, I would that I could discover,
But never did see her face,
And I knew I must turn and follow
Till I came to her resting place."

"And did it go up by the town path,
Did it go down by the lake?
I know there are but the two churchyards
Where a corpse its rest may take."

"They did not go up by the town path,
Nor stopped by the lake their feet,
They buried the corpse all silently
Where the four cross-roads do meet."

"And was it so strange a sight, then,
That you should go like a child,
Thus to leave me wait all forgotten—
By a passing sight beguiled?"

"'Twas my name that I heard them whisper,
Each mourner that passed by me;
And I had to follow their footsteps,
Though their faces I could not see."

"And right well I should like to know, now,
Who might be this fair young maid,
So come with me, my own true love,
If you be not afraid."

He did not go down by the lakeside,
He did not go by the town,
But carried her to the four cross-roads,
And he there did set her down.

"Now, I see no track of a foot here,
I see no mark of a spade,
And I know right well in this white road
That never a grave was made."

And he took her hand in his right hand
And led her to town away,
And there he questioned the good old priest,
Did he bury a maid that day.

And he took her hand in his right hand,
Down to the church by the lake,
And there he questioned the pale young priest
If a maiden her life did take.

But neither had heard of a new grave
In all the parish around,
And no one could tell of a young maid
Thus put in unholy ground.

So he loosed her hand from his hand,
And turned on his heel away,
And, "I know now you are false," he said,
"From the lie you told to-day."

And she said, "Alas ! what evil thing
Did to-night my senses take ?"
She knelt her down by the water-side
And wept as her heart would break.

And she said, "Oh, what fairy sight then
Was it thus my grief to see ?
I will sleep well 'neath the still water,
Since my love has turned from me."

And her love he went to the north land,
And far to the south went he,
And her distant voice he still could hear
Call weeping so bitterly.

And he could not rest in the daytime,
He could not sleep in the night,
So he hastened back to the old road,
With the trysting place in sight.

What first he heard was his own love's name,
And keening both loud and long,
What first he saw was his love's dear face,
At the head of a mourning throng.

And all white she was as the dead are,
And never a move made she,
But passed him by in her lone black pall,
Still sleeping so peacefully.

And all cold she was as the dead are,
And never a word she spake,
When they said, "Unholy is her grave
For she her life did take."

And silent she was as the dead are,
And never a cry she made,
When there came, more sad than the keening,
The ring of a digging spade.

No rest she had in the old town church,
No grave by the lake so sweet,
They buried her in unholy ground,
Where the four cross roads do meet.

FALSE DEARVORGIL¹

WOE to the House of Breffni, and to Red O'Ruark
woe !

Woe to us all in Erinn for the shame that laid us low !
And cursed be you, Dearvorgil, who severed north and
south,
And ruin brought to Erinn with the smiling of your
mouth.

The Prince
of Breffni
suspects
that his
wife Dear-
vorgil has a
lover.

It is the Prince of Breffni rides quick in the pale of
day,
Deep in his eyes a shadow, a frown on his forehead
lay ;
And spur and bit not sparing, he rests nor horse nor
page,
But rides into his castle like a man who wins a wage.

And up the twisting staircase, into his lady's room,
He strides with frowning forehead, like a man to meet
his doom,
But from his lady's chamber he comes with sobbing
breath,
With a joy upon his white lips, like a man escaped
from death.

¹ Dearvorgil was the daughter of the King of Meath and the wife of O'Ruark, Prince of Breffni. She was beloved of Macmurrah, King of Leinster, who is reported to have met her in secret and to have won her affections. Macmurrah carried her off, but in the subsequent war of revenge was defeated, and fled to England. His appeal to Henry II. of Anjou led to the invasion and conquest of Ireland by Strongbow and other Anglo-Norman adventurers.

"And shame be mine, Dearvorgil," beneath his beard
 said he,
 "That I should stoop to listen to a slander told to me.
 And shame be mine, Macmurrah, that I should half
 believe
 You could be false to kingship by stooping to deceive."

But in the lady's chamber the little page did frown,
 And on his cheek so crimson the bitter tears fell
 down.
 "And false she is and cruel, to a knight so brave and
 true,
 And I wot now she is distant, thus leaving him the
 rue.

Her little
 page,
 enamoured
 of her
 beauty, tells
 the prince a
 lie and is
 sorely
 troubled.

"I wot now she is riding far upon her palfrey white,
 And the comrade there beside her is not her own true
 knight—
 A plague upon all women, from north to sunny south,
 Since my lips are dumb to honour for the smiling of
 her mouth!"

But O'Ruark went out right gladly for the lie the page
 had said,
 How his lady still lay resting so weary on her bed ;
 And he went out to the terrace to cool his fevered
 cheek,
 There he saw his kern a-watching, like one afraid to
 speak.

O'Ruark
 goes on the
 terrace to
 quiet his
 unrest be-
 fore he
 seeks his
 lady, and
 while there
 his doubts
 are again
 awakened.

"What see you from your tower now, O kern?" he
 turned and cried.
 "I see one on the near hills upon a king's horse
 ride."
 "What see you from your watch, kern : does nothing
 else appear?"
 "There hides one on the terrace, with her eyes all full
 of fear."

He discovers his wife upon the terrace, where she has hid to watch for her lover.

"And who are you in hiding, who goes 'neath this late moon?"

"I am your true Dearvorgil, glad you are home thus soon."

"No hour for wives to ramble; but wherefore do you weep?"

"With joy for your returning—I wandered in my sleep."

She pretends she has walked in her sleep and is sad for a dream's sake.

"Joy's tears are summer rain, Queen—your eyes are sad and red."

"A dream of evil-boding, and that was all my dread."

"What was the dream distressful that made your face so white?"

"I dreamt that storm and thunder surrounded you to-night."

He tries to draw her into a confession, having seen the King of Leinster riding on a white charger.

"My lady, storm and thunder ride on the near hill's side."

"Then hasten into shelter!" the lady paled and cried.

"In from the lash of tempest I dare not turn to go, Lest, coming up from Leinster, it might lay Ulster low."

She will not understand him, and tries to draw him to her and into the castle.

"My lord, the moon is waning, the dawn grows calm and clear,

There is no angry weather, and wherefore do you fear?"

"My lady, hush! the kern sees something on the way."

"My lord, why listen to him?—I have such news to say."

He does not listen and is full of anger. The kern says he sees a stranger on the highway.

"Nay, I shall hear! be silent! O kern, what do you see?"

"If there's aught on the highroad, now quickly tell to me."

"I see one by the pine-wood come on a charger white,

He seeks the shadow always, as though he fears the light."

"Half-blind the kern, and aged, all wizen, cold, and grey,

A wolf is on the highroad, who hurries quick away."

"A wolf, Queen, is a danger who in the shade does go,
At the thief who seeks the night-time I quick shall
bend my bow."

She tries to
persuade
the prince
it is a wild
dog.

(She screams.)

"Why did you scream, Dearvorgil, disturbing so my
aim?"

"My bodkin pierced me sorely, and that is all my
blame."

The prince
raises his
crossbow,
and she
screams a
warning.

"Then, cry out not so loudly, lest he should turn away."

"My lord has but to bid me, and ever I obey."

"Look, kern, again, and answer, where creeps the lone
wolf now?"

"I see a king's plume waving by yonder oak-tree's
bough."

She tries to
outwit him
again, and
uses all her
charms, but
the prince
is not to be
blinded.

"It is a hawk he watches, that is hanging there so low."

"Then at that bird of evil, dark death, I'll bend my
bow."

"Again you scream, Dearvorgil, and you would have
him hear?"

"A bat that flew across me was all that made me fear."

"The wolf speeds down the highroad all at your lady's
cry,

She screams
again, and
her lover,
knowing
the warning,
flies.

The hawk has spread his dark wings, and seeks another
sky."

"Why should we heed the grey hawk?—Let him fly off
to his nest:

Why should we heed the lone wolf?—Let him go in
peace to rest."

Now that
the danger
is past she
soon flatters
the prince
into believ-
ing she
loves him
alone.

"My lady, neither beast nor bird slunk round my home
to-night;

It is a high and haughty prince who rides away in
fright."

“ And wherefore should you wax so pale, if beast or king
 it be,
 Since for me there is but one prince, who stands all
 wroth with me ?
 There, let the blind kern find his kings in wolf, or hawk,
 or dove,
 But come you from the cold, my lord, into your lady's
 love.”

And therefore, as we do believe that which we most
 desire,
 She wooed suspicion from him, and stilled his jealous
 ire,
 But the little page went sighing, “ A plague may women
 win—
 She has put the anger from him with the dimples in
 her chin.”

But the
 curse fell
 heavy on
 Ireland of
 her foul
 dishonour.

Woe to the House of Breffni, and to the red O'Ruark
 woe !
 And woe to us in Erin for the shame which laid us
 low !
 And cursed be you, Dearvorgil, who eloped into the
 south,
 And made war loud in Erin with the smiling of your
 mouth.

THE FAIRY THORN-TREE

"THIS is an evil night to go, my sister,
To the thorn-tree across the fairy rath,
Will you not wait till Hallow Eve is over?
For many are the dangers in your path!"

"I may not wait till Hallow Eve is over,
I shall be there before the night is fled,
For, brother, I am weary for my lover,
And I must see him once, alive or dead.

"I've prayed to heaven, but it would not listen,
I'll call thrice in the devil's name to-night,
Be it a live man that shall come to hear me,
Or but a corpse, all clad in snowy white."

.

She had drawn on her silken hose and garter,
Her crimson petticoat was kilted high,
She trod her way amid the bog and brambles,
Until the fairy-tree she stood near-by.

When first she cried the devil's name so loudly
She listened, but she heard no sound at all;
When twice she cried, she thought from out the
darkness
She heard the echo of a light footfall.

When last she cried her voice came in a whisper,
She trembled in her loneliness and fright;
Before her stood a shrouded, mighty figure,
In sombre garments blacker than the night.

"And if you be my own true love," she questioned,

"I fear you! Speak you quickly unto me."

"O, I am not your own true love," it answered,

"He drifts without a grave upon the sea."

"If he be dead, then gladly will I follow

Down the black stairs of death into the grave."

"Your lover calls you for a place to rest him

From the eternal tossing of the wave."

"I'll make my love a bed both wide and hollow,

A grave wherein we both may ever sleep."

"What give you for his body fair and slender,

To draw it from the dangers of the deep?"

"I'll give you both my silver comb and earrings,

I'll give you all my little treasure store."

"I will but take what living thing comes forward,

The first to meet you, passing to your door."

"O may my little dog be first to meet me,

So loose my lover from your dreaded hold."

"What will you give me for the heart that loved you,

The heart that I hold chained and frozen cold?"

"My own betrothed ring I give you gladly,

My ring of pearls—and every one a tear!"

"I will but have what other living creature

That second in your pathway shall appear."

"To buy this heart, to warm my love to living,

I pray my pony meet me on return."

"And now, for his young soul what will you give me,

His soul that night and day doth fret and burn?"

"You will not have my silver comb and earrings,

You will not have my ring of precious stone;

O, nothing have I left to promise to you,

But give my soul to buy him back his own."

All woefully she wept, and stepping homeward,
Bemoaned aloud her dark and cruel fate ;
"O, come," she cried, "my little dog to meet me,
And you, my horse, be browsing at the gate."

Right hastily she pushed by bush and bramble,
Chased by a fear that made her footsteps fleet,
And as she ran she met her little brother,
Then her old father coming her to meet.

"O brother, little brother," cried she, weeping,
"Well you said of fairy-tree beware,
For precious things are bought and sold ere mid-
night,
On Hallow Eve, by those who barter there."

She went alone into the little chapel,
And knelt before the holy Virgin's shrine,
She wept, "O Mother Mary, pray you for me,
To save those two most gentle souls of thine."

And as she prayed, behold the holy statue
Spoke to her, saying, "Little can I aid,
God's ways are just, and you have dared to question
His judgment on this soul ; you bought—and paid.

"For that one soul, your father and your brother,
Your own immortal life you bartered ; then,
Yet one chance is allowed—your sure repentance,
Give back his heart you made to live again."

"For these two souls—my father and my brother—
I give his heart back into death's cold land,
Never again to warm his dead, sweet body,
Or beat to madness underneath my hand."

"And for your soul—to save it from its sorrow,
You must drive back his soul into the night,
Back into righteous punishment and justice,
Or lose your chance of everlasting light."

“O, never shall I drive him back to anguish,
My soul shall suffer, letting his go free.”
She rose, and weeping, left the little chapel,
Went forward blindly till she reached the sea.

She dug a grave within the surf and shingle,
A dark, cold bed, made very deep and wide,
She laid her down all stiff and stretched for burial,
Right in the pathway of the rising tide.

First tossed into her waiting arms the restless
Loud waves, a woman very grey and cold,
Within her bed she stood upright so quickly,
And loosed her fingers from the dead hands' hold.

The second who upon her heart had rested
From out the storm, a baby chill and stark,
With one long sob she drew it on her bosom,
Then thrust it out again into the dark.

The last who came so slow was her own lover ;
She kissed his icy face on cheek and chin,
“O cold shall be your house to-night, beloved,
O cold the bed that we must sleep within.

“And heavy, heavy, on our lips so faithful
And on our hearts, shall lie our own roof-tree.”
And as she spoke the bitter tears were falling
On his still face, all salter than the sea.

“And oh,” she said, “if for a little moment
You knew, my cold, dead love, that I was by,
That my soul goes into the utter darkness
When yours comes forth—and mine goes in to die.”

And as she wept she kissed his frozen forehead,
Laid her warm lips upon his mouth so chill,
With no response—and then the waters flowing
Into their grave, grew heavy, deep, and still.

.

And so, 'tis said, if to that fairy thorn-tree
 You dare to go, you see her ghost so lone,
She prays for love of her that you will aid her,
 And give your soul to buy her back her own.

THE DEAD WIFE

THRICE turned she in her narrow bed,
His tears disturbed her rest ;
She kissed the little babe that lay
So still upon her breast.

" Dream well," she said, " my daughter dear,
Since I must leave you lone ;
Three times your father's piteous voice
Did make a grievous moan ;

" Three times your father's bitter cry
Did wake me from my sleep,
So must I go and comfort him
And bid him not to weep."

Her fingers chill she did unlace
From off her breast so white ;
" Poor hands," quoth she, " oft for his sake
You toiled a weary night."

She stepped out from her grave so green
Upon her feet so slim,
" Oft were you wounded on the road
Where you did follow him."

Lone went she up the long boreen
Wherein her love did dwell,
And there she met a nut-brown maid
She once did love full well.

"Now God between us and all harm!"

The maid she fearful cried ;

"I thought you slept within your grave,
Your little babe beside.

"I thought you lay all glad in rest

Who now doth walk alone ;

What grief is on your soul, poor ghost,
What wrong would you atone?"

"My many sins I do deplore,"

The pale young ghost replied ;

"Yet would I sleep to-night full well
My little babe beside.

"From Life's long road all weary I

Would hold such sleeping blest,

Save for the grief of one who mourns
And will not let me rest—

"Save for the tears of one I loved

O'er all the world beside,

Who held me close unto his breast
And named me once his bride.

"I know, as no birds sing for me,

He dreads the thrushes' song ;

Since I am lying in the dark,
He thinks the day too long.

"And so I left my little babe

All lone in her cold bed,

So I might draw him to my side
And dry the tears he shed ;

"So I might bid him weep no more,

But Heaven's pity take,

That bade me forth to bring my dear
From grief and lone heartbreak ;

THE DEAD WIFE

“ Within the shadow of the tomb
In one embrace to rest,
My shoulder for his weary head,
His babe upon my breast.”

Now when the maiden all so pale
This piteous tale did hear,
She loosed her braids of nut-brown hair,
And dropped full oft a tear.

“ Now go you back, poor ghost,” said she,
“ And may your sleep be sound ;
And grieve you naught for any man
Who walks the upper ground.

“ And do not wake for any soul
Who on this earth doth live ;
For if your dear doth grieve him sore
You could not comfort give.

“ For he doth weep the lone night through
And all the weary day,
Since I unto his suit am cold
And to his love say nay !”

THE BALLAD OF THE LITTLE BLACK HOUND

Who knocks at the Geraldine's door to-night
In the black storm and the rain ?
With the thunder crash and the shrieking wind
Comes the moan of a creature's pain.

And once they knocked, yet never a stir
To show that the Geraldine knew ;
And twice they knocked, yet never a bolt
The listening Geraldine drew.

And thrice they knocked ere he moved his chair,
And said, "Whoever it be,
I dare not open the door to-night
For a fear that has come to me."

Three times he rises from out his chair,
And three times he sits him down.
"Now what makes faint this heart of mine ?"
He says with a growing frown.

"Now what has made me a coward to-night,
Who never knew fear before ?
But I swear the hand of a little child
Keeps pulling me from the door."

The Geraldine rose from his chair at last
And opened the door full wide ;
"Whoever is out in the storm," said he,
"May in God's name come inside !"

He who was out in the storm and rain
Drew back at the Geraldine's call.
"Now who comes not in the Holy Name
Will never come in at all."

He looked to the right, he looked to the left,
And never a one saw he ;
But right in his path lay a coal black hound,
A-moaning right piteously.

"Come in," he cried, "you little black hound,
Come in, I will ease your pain ;
My roof shall keep you to-night at least
From the leash of wind and rain."

The Geraldine took up the little black hound,
And put him down by the fire.
"So sleep you there, poor wandering one,
As long as your heart desire."

The Geraldine tossed on his bed that night,
And never asleep went he
For the crowing of his little red cock,
That did crow most woefully,

For the howling of his own wolf-hound,
That cried at the gate all night.
He rose and went to the banquet hall
At the first of morning light.

He looked to the right, he looked to the left,
At the rug which the dog lay on ;
But the reindeer skin was burnt in two,
And the little black hound was gone.

And, traced in the ashes, these words he read :
"For the soul of your firstborn son,
I will make you rich as you once were rich
Ere the glass of your luck was run."

The Geraldine went to the west window,
And then he went to the east,
And saw his desolate pasture fields,
And the stables without a beast.

"So be it, as I love no woman,
No son shall ever be mine ;
I would that my stables were full of steeds,
And my cellars were full of wine.

"I swear it, as I love no woman,
And never a son have I,
I would that my sheep and their little lambs
Should flourish and multiply.

"So yours be the soul of my firstborn son."
Here the Geraldine slyly smiled,
But from the dark of the lonely room
Came the cry of a little child.

The Geraldine went to the west window,
He opened, and out did lean,
And lo ! the pastures were full of kine,
All chewing the grass so green.

And quickly he went to the east window,
And his face was pale to see,
For lo ! he saw to the empty stalls
Brave steeds go three by three.

The Geraldine went to the great hall door,
In wonder at what had been,
And up there came the prettiest maid
That ever his eyes had seen.

And long he looked at the pretty young maid,
And swore there was none so fair ;
And his heart went out of him like a hound,
And hers like a timid hare.

Each day he followed her up and down,
And each night he could not rest,
Until at last the pretty young maid
Her love for him all confessed.

They wooed and they wed, and the days went by
As quick as such good days will,
And at last came the cry of his firstborn son
The cup of his joy to fill.

And the summer passed, and the winter came ;
Right fair was the child to see,
And he laughed at the shriek of a bitter storm
As he sat on his father's knee.

Who rings so loud at the Geraldine's gate ?
Who knocks so loud at the door ?
" Now rise you up, my pretty young wife,
For twice they have knocked before."

Quickly she opened the great hall door,
And " Welcome you in," she cried,
But there only entered a little black hound,
And he would not be denied.

When the Geraldine saw the little black dog,
He rose with a fearful cry,
" I sold my child to the Devil's hound
In forgotten days gone by."

He drew his sword on the little black hound,
But it would not pierce its skin,
He tried to pray, but his lips were dumb
Because of his grievous sin.

Then the fair young wife took the black hound's
throat
Both her small white hands between.
And he thought he saw one of God's angels
Where his sweet young wife had been.

Then he thought he saw from God's spirit
The hound go sore oppressed,
But he woke to find his own dead wife
With her dead child on her breast.

Quickly he went to the west window,
Quickly he went to the east ;
No help in the desolate pasture fields,
Or the stables that held no beast.

He flung himself at his white wife's side,
And the dead lips moved and smiled,
Then came somewhere from the lonely room
The laugh of a little child.

THE PRIEST'S BROTHER

THRICE in the night the priest arose
From broken sleep to kneel and pray.
“ Hush, poor ghost, till the red cock crows,
And I a Mass for your soul may say.”

Thrice he went to the chamber cold,
Where, stiff and still uncoffinèd,
His brother lay, his beads he told,
And “ Rest, poor spirit, rest,” he said.

Thrice lay the old priest down to sleep
Before the morning bell should toll ;
But still he heard—and woke to weep—
The crying of his brother's soul.

All through the dark, till dawn was pale,
The priest tossed in his misery,
With muffled ears to hide the wail.
The voice of that ghost's agony.

At last the red cock flaps his wings
To trumpet of a day new-born.
The lark, awaking, soaring sings
Into the bosom of the morn.

The priest before the altar stands,
He hears the spirit call for peace ;
He beats his breast with shaking hands.
“ O Father, grant this soul's release.

"Most Just and Merciful, set free
From Purgatory's awful night
This sinner's soul, to fly to Thee,
And rest for ever in Thy sight."

The Mass is over—still the clerk
Kneels pallid in the morning glow.
He said, "From evils of the dark
Oh, bless me, father, ere you go.

"Benediction, that I may rest,
For all night did the banshee weep." i
The priest raised up his hands and blest—
"Go now, my child, and you will sleep."

The priest went down the vestry stair,
He laid his vestments in their place,
And turned—a pale ghost met him there,
With beads of pain upon his face.

"Brother," he said, "you have gained me peace,
But why so long did you know my tears,
And say no Mass for my soul's release,
To save the torture of all those years?"

"God rest you, brother," the good priest said,
"No years have passed—but a single night."
He showed the body uncoffined,
And the six wax candles still alight.

The living flowers on the dead man's breast
Blew out a perfume sweet and strong.
The spirit paused ere he passed to rest—
"God save your soul from a night so long."

A BALLAD OF MARJORIE

"WHAT ails you that you look so pale,
O fisher of the sea?"

"'Tis for a mournful tale I own,
Fair maiden Marjorie."

"What is the dreary tale to tell,
O toiler of the sea?"

"I cast my net into the waves,
Sweet maiden Marjorie."

"I cast my net into the tide,
Before I made for home;
Too heavy for my hands to raise,
I drew it through the foam."

"What saw you that you look so pale,
Sad searcher of the sea?"

"A dead man's body from the deep
My haul had brought to me!"

"And was he young, and was he fair?"

"Oh, cruel to behold!

In his white face the joy of life
Not yet was grown a-cold."

"Oh, pale you are, and full of prayer
For one who sails the sea."

"Because the dead looked up and spoke,
Poor maiden Marjorie."

"What said he, that you seem so sad,
O fisher of the sea?
(Alack ! I know it was my love,
Who fain would speak to me !)"

"He said, 'Beware a woman's mouth—
A rose that bears a thorn.'"
"Ah, me ! these lips shall smile no more
That gave my lover scorn."

"He said, 'Beware a woman's eyes.
They pierce you with their death.'"
"Then falling tears shall make them blind
That robbed my dear of breath."

"He said, 'Beware a woman's hair—
A serpent's coil of gold.'"
"Then will I shear the cruel locks
That crushed him in their fold."

"He said, 'Beware a woman's heart
As you would shun the reef.'"
"So let it break within my breast,
And perish of my grief."

"He raised his hands : a woman's name
Thrice bitterly he cried :
My net had parted with the strain ;
He vanished in the tide."

"A woman's name ! What name but mine,
O fisher of the sea ?"
"A woman's name, but not your name,
Poor maiden Marjorie."

THE DEER-STONE

A LEGEND OF GLENDALOUGH

IT was the bride of Colman Dhu
In Glendalough sat down,
She hushed the babe upon her breast
Beside the lake so brown.

The mountains steep about her rose
All glad in green and gold,
The heart of all the waters deep
Again their glory hold.

Now had the bride of Colman Dhu
Looked long towards the west,
She there had seen the glowing sun
Slip slow towards his rest.

But had she looked towards the east,
A maid there was to see,
Who bore two daggers in her eyes—
Black hate and jealousy.

She did not look towards the east,
Nor looked she to the south,
But closed her two white lids in sleep,
A smile on her red mouth.

Oh, had she seen the evil maid
Who death so stealthily bore,
She had not closed her lashes long
She now would raise no more.

Slow crept the witch unto her side,
And saw with furious eye
The smiling two in slumber deep,
Who did so helpless lie.

"And for the tears, O Colman proud,
That I have shed for you,
I'll drive a sorrow in your breast
To break your heart in two.

"And for the words that you have said,
To crush me with disdain,
I'll hush the laughter on your lips
That shall not smile again."

Within her hand a deadly draught
She raised a moment up,
"And shall it be your little son
Who first must taste the cup?"

"Ah, no! For should your bride awake,
Her grief would mend your moan,
For you in pity at her tears
Would half forget your own.

"But if death lies upon her heart,
The two are surely slain;
The little babe must thirst and die,
And you are mine again."

She looked upon each lovely face
That held a soul asleep,
"And one shall drink of deadly wine,
A draught both long and deep."

She looked upon the baby lips
That curling 'neath her eyes,
Sought some sweet fountain in his dreams,
And fed with gentle sighs.

Then with a frown and muttered groan
Quick to the other crept,
And raised the cup in her false hand,
To slay them while they slept.

Ah, gentle Nature, at the deed
You quenched within the west
Your golden lamp, so none might see
The murder stand confessed.

Then thrice upon the frightened air,
The dying lips drew breath,
Twice in they drew the wine of life,
And once the draught of death.

.
Now Colman, with his spear in hand,
Late coming from the chase,
Heard the low weeping of a child
Within a lonesome place.

"Oh, hard your mother's heart," he said,
"Your cries she will not hear!"
Quick from his steed he sprang, and saw
His wife and child so dear.

Soft came the weeping of the babe
Whose fount had grown so cold.
He flung himself upon the earth,
And did his wife enfold.

All silent was she to his cries,
Her cheek was cold as death,
And to his hot impassioned kiss
Came no responsive breath.

And when he saw that she was dead
He rose up to his feet,
And wrapped her in his hunting coat
To make her winding sheet.

"Mo Chree," he said, "your bed to-night
Will be both dark and cold,
On what new island will you wake,
Or what strange face behold ?

"Asthór," he said, "lest you should fear
To wander forth alone,
I'll follow through the gates of death
To claim you for my own."

Into his fond and loving heart
He drove his hunting knife,
And by his bride's chill side he lay,
And soon gave up his life.

.

It was the good St. Kevin went,
All bowed and lost in prayer,
And as he paced his lonely path
The young witch met him there.

And in her gown the poison cup
She did most quickly hide,
But spoke the good saint unto her,
And would not be denied.

"What evil thing is this ?" he said,
"That you must put away ?
It is no gracious act indeed
That fears the light of day."

"It is but bread," the witch replied,
"From my small store I take,
To feed a poor deserted babe,
I go for pity sake."

"Now, be it bread," the priest replied,
"I pray it multiply ;
But if it is an evil thing,
Full heavy may it lie."

And then the priest, all deep in prayer,
Went forth his lonely way,
While stood the witch upon the path
In wild and deep dismay.

For in her robe the poison cup
Did all so heavy grow,
She scarce could stand upon her feet,
And could but slowly go.

Now when she reached the rugged rock
That held her hidden home,
The waters threw their magic up
And blinded her with foam.

She gave a sharp and sudden cry
And fell within the lake,
And so may perish all who sin,
And evil vengeance take.

But good St. Kevin, deep in prayer,
His holy way did go.
Soon came to him the sound of grief,
Soft cries of bitter woe.

There in a dark and lonesome place
A little babe he found,
And, close beside, a lovely pair
All cold upon the ground.

"Movrone, Movrone," the good saint cried,
"What evil deed is here?"
And for their beauty and their youth
He shed a bitter tear.

He dug for them a lonely grave,
A grave both wide and deep,
"And slumber well," he softly said,
"Till God shall end your sleep."

He knelt him down upon his knee
Their lonely bed beside,
And then he saw the little babe
That weak in hunger cried.

He raised it up in his two hands,
And held it close and warm,
"O Christ," he said, "your mercy give
To keep this child from harm.

"Oh, pitiful indeed is this
Poor little one alone,
Whose dead lie peaceful in their sleep
While he doth make his moan.

"O Mary, who in Bethlehem
Held once upon thy breast
A tender babe, look down on this
Who is so sore oppressed.

"I have no food for this poor child,
Who must with hunger die.
Thy mercy give," the good priest prayed
With many a piteous sigh.

He looked across the waters deep,
And to the hills so brown,
And lo ! a shy wood creature there
All timidly came down.

And thrice it sprang towards the west,
And thrice towards the east,
It was as though some hand unseen
Drove forth the gentle beast.

But when the little child it heard,
That still with hunger cried,
It sprang before the guiding hand,
And stood the babe beside.

And in a hollowed stone it shed
Its milk so warm and white,
And then, all timid, stood apart
To watch the babe's delight.

.
And at each eve and every morn
The gentle doe was there,
To find the little babe, and see
The saint, all deep in prayer.

.
In Glendalough the stone lies still
All plainly to be seen,
And many folk will point the place
Where once the milk had been.

KATHLEEN'S CHARITY

"God bless the work," said young Kathleen,
She bent her golden head,
And in her cheek that was so pale
The blood crept rosy red.

Quick flew the humming spinning-wheel,
The thread was all but done,
And like the pale shafts of a star
The gleaming strands she spun.

"And when the cloth is mine"—she smiled,
The wheel sang soft and low—
"I'll make a robe all straight and white,
That I a bride may go."

"The world is good," she said, and laughed,
A-turning of her wheel,
Then by her stood a beggar maid,
Who prayed with faint appeal.

"I have not gold," sighed sweet Kathleen,
"Nor silver you to give,
Yet if you go so pale and wan
I fear you scarce can live."

"So take my thread, 'twill weave a gown
To keep you from the cold."
The beggar kissed the giving hand,
And blessed a hundred-fold.

"My work is done," said poor Kathleen,
And put her wheel aside,
"Yet like God's Mother sweet she looked,
So fair and holy-eyed."

"And though no silken gown I wear
To deck me as a bride,
I yet can pray with grateful heart,
For we have much beside.

"To-morrow in the bare brown earth
We set our golden seed,
The yellow corn we scatter wide,
To make us rich indeed."

Now as she spake beside her stood
An aged man and frail,
And there all piteous to her ear,
He told a woeful tale.

"I have not silver now nor gold,
Nor cloth to robe you in,
Yet should I giftless drive you forth
It were a grievous sin."

She gave the sack of golden corn
That was her father's store,
And in her breast her frightened heart
Was beating wild and sore.

"Oh, woe is me," she turned and cried,
"My father stern and cold,
Oh, cruel will he be to her
Who robbed him of his gold!"

She took the chaff in her two hands
With many a moan and sigh,
And spread it on the bare brown earth
Before her sire went by.

"Ahone," she said, "to so deceive
My father blind and grey,
For little store shall bear the seed
That I have sown to-day."

She bent to weep, but by her side
A child stood all alone,
"And 'tis in vain," poor Kathleen cried,
"That here you make your moan."

"For I have left no gifts to give,
No cloth, no food, no gold ;
So I must drive you forth," she said,
"To perish in the cold."

She took the child unto her heart,
And then her tears let fall,
"Oh, woe it is to bid you go,
And you so weak and small."

She set him down upon his way
And kissed his cheek and chin,
And then she saw a golden thread
He held his hands within.

"I met a lady on the road,"
The little one replied,
"She said this thread would weave a gown
To robe a happy bride."

"She bade me when I met with one
Whose mercy was so great
She'd give her very tears away
In pity for my state—

"She said, 'Give her this silken thread
A wedding gown to weave.'"
Fair Kathleen took the golden ball,
But yet her heart did grieve.

“For I have robbed my father dear,
My father old and weak,
And oh, what shall I answer him
When he his grain shall seek?

“And oh, what shall I say to him
That he could me believe
Who sowed the chaff upon the ground,
His dim eyes to deceive?”

And woeful looked she to the north,
And woeful to the south,
And there she saw a little child
With laughter on his mouth.

She looked into her father's field,
Where once the chaff had been,
And lo! the sprouting grain was there,
With ears all high and green.

“The world is good,” said young Kathleen,
And knelt her down to pray,
“I know that some of God's sweet saints
Did visit me to-day.”

THE FOOLISH OLD MAN

A MILLER's daughter, as I heard tell—
Sing heigh ! but the maid was merry—
Was loved by her father's man full well,
His cheek was brown as a berry.

He made the grey mare fast to her stall,
The red cow drove to the byre,
Then he sought the old man in his hall,
Where he sat before the fire.

Quoth he, " Old man, I have served you true,
Full twenty years and over,
Now your daughter's hand I do beg from you
That she wed her faithful lover."

When the farmer heard the youth so speak
There was not reason in him,
His anger like a storm did break,
He feared he could not win him.

Cried he, " Rash youth, since you dare to nurse
This dream,—this secret wooing,
If you should wed, may a father's curse
Be your swift and sure undoing.

" My curse shall feed on your fields of corn,
On your roof-tree make its nesting,
Your wife shall wish your child unborn
As he pines on her sore heart resting."

Now when this cruel oath he said
The youth did chide him, crying,
"Since I have neither field nor bed
Your curse shall fall to dying.

"But if I had yon broad grass land,
And there put roof and rafter,
I vow revenge were to your hand
And you'd have all the laughter."

"If that be so," the old man cried,
Unto the faithful lover,
"Take you yon keep the wood beside,
And the land that it doth cover.

"So my oath fall on land and lot,
On house and home forever,
Your wife shall pine on the cursed spot,
I shall be beaten never!"

When thus he spoke in anger wild,
The youth did stay him, saying,
"Since I have neither wife nor child
Still goes your curse delaying.

"But should I win for my true bride
Some day your own fair daughter,
Alack! not then your will denied
To make a grievous slaughter."

When the old man this tale did hear,
He tried no more to stay him,
He gave the youth his daughter dear,
So that his curse might slay him.

.
All silent he for a year and a day
All lone with his rage and sorrow,
Then he spoke his wrath, "Too long I stay,
I will seek their roof to-morrow."

At dawn he sprang on his old grey mare
And to their gate went speeding.
Pale at the door stood his daughter fair,
Her beauty was all exceeding.

Hushed in her arms was her son so dear,
As though she feared to lose him—
She laid the babe with a smile and a tear
Upon her father's bosom.

"Now curse, if you will, our good roof-tree
And all that doth lie under,
But spare our child, so dear," quoth she,
"Or cleave my heart asunder."

He had no curse for her piteous cry,
But his long lone love confessing,
With dim eyes raised to the morning sky,
He gave—a father's blessing.

THE BEGGAR-MAN

A BEGGAR sat by the King's highway,
O, but the road was long !
His hair was black and his beard was grey.
Hark to the linnel's song !
He sat him down by the churchyard gate,
He beat his breast and bemoaned his fate.
There passed the King in his royal state.
Gay ride the merry throng.

There rode the King with his golden crown,
A hawk in the far blue sky.
His haughty Queen in her silken gown.
O, bleats a lamb close by ?
Then came full slow on her palfrey white
The Princess, pale as the March moonlight,
And woeful it was to watch her plight.
Hark to the lost lamb's cry !

Then passed the Prince of a far-off land,
What can you buy for gold ?
Who came for his claim on the maid's small hand,
A lamb that has lost its fold.
His eyes were chill as the snow-set thorn,
And he rode all grim on his marriage morn,
He scowled at the maid who his suit did scorn.
O, but the wind blows cold !

By went the page in his coat of brown,
 Gay was the song he sung.
He knocked the beggar's old oak staff down ;
 O, but the world was young !
His laugh was rude as he danced away,
He mocked and jeered in his foolish play,
But never a word did the old man say.
 Hark, have the church bells rung ?

Next came, all chattering, knight and dame,
 See how the rooks perch low !
"To marry a maiden so were shame,"
 Twelve dark birds all a-row.
They blamed the Prince for his cruelty,
To wed with a maid all sad as she,
Whose heart he knew his could never be.
 O, for a good cross-bow !

Now when they came to the great church-door,
 Sing hey for the wedding-ring !
The maid she fell to a passion sore ;
 Hark how the choir-boys sing !
"This deed," she said, "I do scorn and hate,
And would it save me from my sad fate,
I'd wed the beggar beside the gate."
 Ah, love is a grievous thing !

Now when this wish the proud Prince did hear,
 The priest to the altar goes,
And on her cheek saw the bitter tear,
 Pale is the frost-kissed rose,
He made a low and a scornful bow,
"Of love I too have had all enow,
This rival suit I shall glad allow."
 O, what a grey wind blows !

Then spake the King like the pale-cold dead,
 An ill day is full long,
"So you with the beggar-man would wed ?"
 Still is the linnet's song.

He drew her up to the old man's side,
He said, "Arise, and behold your bride.
She, for your sake, has a Prince denied."
Loud are the laughing throng.

"Then," said the King, "come and claim your
bride,"
"My false love bid me wait,"
And she shall sing on the bleak hillside,
"Ah, doleful is my fate!"
He chid his Queen when she dared to speak;
Who kissed the maid on her death-cold cheek,
And held her close lest her heart should break.
"My love will come too late."

The King strode on with a fearsome frown,
O, for the book and bell!
His weeping Queen in her silken gown.
Long is the tale to tell.
The Princess wan as the March moonlight,
Who cried alone, all a doleful sight,
Of slighted hope and of broken plight.
A slow love is not well.

And the gay young page all full of glee,
Sweet was his tuneful cry.
For in this coil not a tear found he.
Alack that youth must die!
Each knight with his lady curious came,
To speak of the King with a muttered blame,
"To wed these two were a woeful shame."
See how the black rooks fly!

Then the priest did bless the marriage-ring,
"Long shall I live to rue,"
And the wedding-bells all high did swing.
"Go, for I love not you!"

But the bride she bowed her golden head,
And she sighed, "O would that I were dead,
Since my false love I may never wed!"

Ah, that her love were true!

The tears flowed quick from her drooping eyes,

O, but her cheeks were pale!

And she gave her gentle breast to sighs.

Low did she weep and wail.

"When my haughty sire your suit denied
You swore to make me still your bride,
All brave you stood and his rage defied."

Alack that trust should fail!

But the little page he mocked and jeered,

Gay was the song he sung,

And he plucked the old man by the beard,

O, but his heart was young!

And he pulled right hard in youthful play
Till he plucked the beggar's beard away,
And there stood Shaun of Dun Clonleigh.

Full loud his laughter rung.

And there stood Shaun, all so good to see,

Now let the joy-bells chime.

Of Irish manhood full six-foot-three.

Love brings the summer clime.

And when this pother the King did know,

He out from the church did furious go,

And he bade his smiling Queen also.

Spring is the mating time.

And by them quick went the Prince so proud.

The hawk is flying by.

His face was like the grey thunder-cloud.

Hark to the lost lamb's cry!

He flung himself on his chafing steed,

And rode away at his utmost speed,

And no good wish did he make, or deed.

The shepherd's arm is nigh.

Then slow did follow the fair young bride,
 Strew roses for her feet !
Her own true lover was by her side,
 And O, but youth is sweet !
And the little page with laughter gay,
From whose smooth chin with a great display
There hung the beggar-man's beard of grey.
 Woe that time is fleet !

But loitering last came knight and dame,
 So ends this holiday.
To whisper oft their grief and shame,
 Much did they find to say,
How she bade a Prince come forth to woo,
And then his fond heart broke in two ;
This was no thing for a maid to do,
 All on the King's highway !

THE ANGLER

WHEN saucy Celia came my way
I knew my sport was ended,
So ceased my cunning rod to play,
Since she the fish befriended.

Across my eyes her tangled locks
She bound with childish laughter,
"Here is the shadow, sir," said she ;
"Now, who doth follow after ?"

"'Tis saucy Celia, she," quoth I,
"Who comes all uninvited ;
And with much noisy merriment
Hath all my fish affrighted !"

"Not so." She pointed to the stream,
Where peeped her sweet reflection ;
"If you would fish, good sir, behold,
There's fishing in perfection."

I smiled upon her winsome face
And pulled the tresses straying.
"Nay, child," I said, "the baby fish
Are never worth the slaying."

Quick from my hand the lock she tore,
Her face was sore offended ;
"Farewell," she said, "thou foolish youth,
Our friendship is all ended.

“ If thou my hand should seek to claim
I'll leave thee lone in sorrow ;
What thou to-day may'st cast aside,
Thou may'st desire to-morrow.”

She stood apart, the little maid,
Because I did offend her ;
And there bound up her golden locks,
With hands all white and slender.

When Celia thus bound up her hair,
I gazed in awe and wonder,
And chid my foolish heart the while
To think it e'er had shunned her.

The dainty face with its disdain,
The tearful eye averted,
The lips that trembled on their speech
By all their mirth deserted.

Till Celia first bound up her hair
In one gold coil above her,
I did not know so sweet a shape
Was hidden 'neath its cover.

So proudly poised the little head,
On dimpled neck and shoulder,
The timid touch of womanhood
All sudden seemed to hold her.

“ Sweet maid,” I cried—a fear awoke !—
“ Oh, give me no refusing ;
Let down thy silken locks and be
The Celia I am losing.

“ Come, thou shalt woo the silly fish ”—
To her my rod I tended,
“ And oh, have pity on thy catch,
Ere their brief life be ended.”

'Twas saucy Celia smiled on me,
All banished was her sorrow :
" To-day I'll loose the silly fish,
For I shall kill to-morrow."

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

SHE had hair gold as her father's corn ;
She tripped and sung,
Like to a little lamb new-born,
So gay, so young.

She gathered lone in the long day's shade,
So soft, so shy,
Ripe berries red, poor little maid—
And he came by.

He loved youth well, and her years were few,
Was he ever young ?
A cold heart hid 'neath his eyes stone blue,
And a honeyed tongue.

He loved gold hair, and her tresses strayed
Like the pale sunrise,
And a gentle gaze, poor little maid—
She had sweet eyes.

He rode all lone with his horse and hound,
Now his hunting done.
With his chin on breast and his eyes on ground
In the setting sun.

She gathered there in the long day's shade
Ripe fruit all red,
And life was good, poor little maid,
She sung and said.

But Fate in an evil mood let slip
A rolling stone
In the steed's swift way, and it ran to trip
The frightened roan.

She leaned from the bush, all sore afraid
At the tumult there,
Her dimpled face, poor little maid,
And shining hair.

He stayed to woo and his love to tell
For an idle day,
Opened the gates of Heaven—of Hell—
Then rode away.

With a smile and a jest for his time delayed,
He came to town—
In the lake's deep heart, poor little maid,
She laid her down.

And I, who heard the tale retold,
Still wond'ring wait.
Will the man some time, a thousandfold,
Repent her fate?

But he laughs to-day with his sin unpaid,
And she sleeping lies—
So white, so still—poor little maid,
She had sweet eyes.

THE YOUTH BEWITCHED

My fair-haired boy is sore bewitched,
He goes all full of grieving ;
The web of gloom upon his brow
Is sure of fairy weaving.

His cheery laugh I never hear,
His voice is rough and chiding ;
Upon his path some evil thing
Does watch him from its hiding.

Ah ! Alone ! I bid him tell
If he has trod unknowing
Upon the fairy sleeping grass
Or cut the thorn a-growing.

He only turns his head away,
His words are bitter hearing ;
But, ah ! he cannot silence so
A mother's heart from fearing.

Last night I made a waxen shape
To bring the witch before me,
So she could take the sullen lad,
And my bright child restore me.

Nine pins I thrust within its side
To pierce her heart to dying,
And laid it on the glowing turf,
So listened for her crying.

Soon pressed a hand upon the latch,
I feared the evil fairy ;
But when I raised my frightened eyes
'Twas none but Dwyer's Mary.

I told her of the boy bewitched,
She listened unbelieving ;
And said she knew to-morrow's eve
Would free him of his grieving.

She turned her blushing face aside,
Her voice was low and cheering ;
But, ah ! she cannot silence so
A mother's heart from fearing.

YOUNG UNA

UPON the shore young Una lies,
A smile upon her mouth ;
Soft breezes kiss her heavy hair,
Slow blowing from the South.

Within the cabin on the hill
Her mother doth complain :
"God bless the child ! her feet are slow
To bear her home again."

Her mother's mother, grey and old,
She laughs beside the fire :
"Once I was hot as she, a-stór,
To gain my heart's desire."

And Una, smiling on the sea,
She speaks no word at all,
But watches with untiring eyes
The waves that break and fall.

Far in the East her father's ship
Lifts the blue waves to foam.
Her father's hand upon the helm
Now guides the vessel home.

And he hath safe a robe of silk,
All gold as Una's hair ;
Strange jewels, too, from out the West,
To deck his child so fair.

But Una with unclosing eyes
Looks long towards the South ;
The spray hangs diamonds on her hair,
A smile is on her mouth.

Now Una's lover in the wood,
The wood beside the shore,
He breathes his passion to the night
" Oh, love me, love, a-stór."

He kneels beside another maid,
She leans to hear him speak,
His arm is on her shoulder white,
Her kiss is on his cheek.

But Una, lone upon the shore,
Cares naught for what may be ;
She smiles beneath the changing sky,
On shadow-haunted sea.

THE LITTLE BROTHER

O BROTHER, brother, come down to the crags by the
bay,
Come down to the caves where I play ;
For oh ! I saw on the rocks, asleep,
A fair mermaid, and the slow waves creep
To bear her away, away.

O brother, brother, come quick, till you laugh with me,
For no mermaid so fair is she,
But the little lass that I saw last night,
(I hid in the shade, you stood in the light),
And she weeping most bitterly.

O brother, brother, I watched her the live-long day,
Saw her hair grow jewelled with spray ;
Once her cheek was brushed by a gull's wet wing,
And a finch flew down on her hand to sing,
And was not afraid to stay.

O brother, brother, will she soon awakened be ?
I would she might laugh now with me.
She sleeps, and the world so full of sound—
She's so deaf, like the dead that are under the ground,
That I laugh and laugh to see.

THE MAN WHO TROD ON SLEEPING GRASS

IN a field by Cahirconlish
I stood on sleeping grass,
No cry I made to Heaven
From my dumb lips would pass.

Three days, three nights I slumbered,
And till I woke again
Those I have loved have sought me,
And sorrowed all in vain.

My neighbours still upbraid me,
And murmur as I pass,
"There goes a man enchanted.
He trod on fairy grass."

My little ones around me,
They claim my old caress,
I push them roughly from me
With hands that cannot bless.

My wife upon my shoulder
A bitter tear lets fall,
I turn away in anger
And love her not at all.

For like a man surrounded,
In some sun-haunted lane,
By countless wings that follow,
A grey and stinging chain,

Around my head for ever
I hear small voices speak
In tongues I cannot follow,
I know not what they seek.

I raise my hands to find them
When autumn winds go by,
And see between my fingers
A broken summer fly.

I raise my hands to hold them
When winter days are near,
And clasp a falling snowflake
That breaks into a tear.

And ever follows laughter
That echoes through my heart,
From some delights forgotten
Where once I had a part.

What love comes, half-remembered,
In half-forgotten bliss ?
Who lay upon my bosom,
And had no human kiss ?

Where is the land I loved in ?
What music did I sing
That left my ears enchanted
Inside the fairy ring ?

I see my neighbours shudder,
And whisper as I pass :
" Three nights the fairies stole him ;
He trod on sleeping grass."

CEAN DUV DEELISH

Cean duv deelish, beside the sea
I stand and stretch my hands to thee
 Across the world.
The riderless horses race to shore
With thundering hoofs and shuddering, hoar,
 Blown manes uncurled.

Cean duv deelish, I cry to thee
Beyond the world, beneath the sea,
 Thou being dead.
Where hast thou hidden from the beat
Of crushing hoofs and tearing feet
 Thy dear black head ?

Cean duv deelish, 'tis hard to pray
With breaking heart from day to day,
 And no reply ;
When the passionate challenge of sky is cast
In the teeth of the sea and an angry blast
 Goes keening by.

God bless the woman, whoever she be,
From the tossing waves will recover thee
 And lashing wind.
Who will take thee out of the wind and storm,
Dry thy wet face on her bosom warm
 And lips so kind ?

I not to know. It is hard to pray,
But I shall for this woman from day to day,
 "Comfort my dead,
The sport of the winds and the play of the sea."
I loved thee too well for this thing to be,
 O dear black head !

THE BRIDAL OF LADY AIDEEN

O LADY AIDEEN, will you wed with me, wed with me in
the early morning ?

A silken gown for your body's wear, a golden crown for
your hair's adorning.

(One flirting magpie on the quicken tree flies from his
perching 'twixt you and me.)

The proudest colt that my land has fed

For you shall chafe first harnessèd,

And for your bidding six maidens be.

(O bird of sorrow, 'tween hope and me !)

O Earl Desmond, I am loath to speak, loath to speak for
your true heart's sorrow,

I'll be a bride at no man's altar, though I be a wedded
bride to-morrow.

(Death's hand closes on the digging spade ; rest for ever
'neath the yew-tree's shade.)

Six slow steeds will my body bear,

To fret or prance they will not care,

And no handmaiden with me would dwell.

(Hark ! the tolling of the passing bell.)

O Lady Aideen, will you name for me, name for me who
won my refusing ?

Who hath the singing and all the sun on earth for ever
and I the losing ?

(Oh, the plough horses going off from me, sorrow and
tears will my harvest be !)

My arms were strong for your woman's fear ;

My heart were weak for your loving, dear.

What can he give whom you will not name ?

(Clings a winding-sheet by the candle's flame.)

O Earl Desmond, be you brave for sorrow, brave for
sorrow which is no man's shielding ;
Love has wept till his eyes grew blind, and victory's not
in a weapon's yielding.

(Six black horses awaiting me, the ring of the spade has
ceased to be.)

My lord is named with a bated breath,
Whom hope calls "Life" and despair names
"Death."

And, oh, his love no world can kill !
(The banshee waits on the window-sill.)

THE FAIRIES

THE fairies, the fairies, the mischief-loving fairies,
Have stolen my loved one, my darling, and my dear ;
With charms and enchantments they lured and waylaid
him,
So my love cannot comfort and my presence cannot
cheer.

The fairies, the fairies, I'll love no more the fairies ;
I'll never sweep the hearth for them or care the fairy
thorn,
I'll skim no more the yellow cream nor leave the per-
fumed honey ;
But I'll drive the goats for pasture to their greenest
rath each morn.

With Ave, and Ave, and many a Paternoster,
Within their magic circle I'll tell my beads for you ;
My prayers be sharp as arrows to pierce their soulless
bosoms
Till they come with loud sorrow to tell me that they
rue.

My darling, my darling, what glamour is upon you
That you find for your gaze satisfaction and content
In the charms of that colleen, with her black snaky
ringlets,
Her red lips contemptuous, and her gloomy brows so
bent?

The fairies, the fairies, from her blue eyes were peeping ;
They blew her hair about you so you were lost, my
dear.
With their charms and enchantments they lured and
waylaid you,
So my love cannot comfort and my presence cannot
cheer.

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

[There is a superstition in some parts of Ireland that the dead are allowed to return to earth on the 2nd of November (All Souls' Night), and the peasantry leave food and fire for their comfort, and set a chair by the hearth for their resting before they themselves retire to bed.]

O MOTHER, mother, I swept the hearth, I set his chair
and the white board spread,
I prayed for his coming to our kind Lady when Death's
sad doors would let out the dead ;
A strange wind rattled the window-pane, and down the
lane a dog howled on.
I called his name and the candle flame burnt dim, pressed
a hand the door-latch upon.
Deelish ! Deelish ! my woe forever that I could not sever
coward flesh from fear.
I called his name and the pale Ghost came ; but I was
afraid to meet my dear.

O mother, mother, in tears I checked the sad hours past
of the year that's o'er,
Till by God's grace I might see his face and hear the
sound of his voice once more ;
The chair I set from the cold and wet, he took when he
came from unknown skies
Of the Land of the Dead, on my bent brown head I felt
the reproach of his saddened eyes ;
I closed my lids on my heart's desire, crouched by the
fire, my voice was dumb.
At my clean-swept hearth he had no mirth, and at my
table he broke no crumb.
Deelish ! Deelish ! my woe forever that I could not sever
coward flesh from fear.
His chair put aside when the young cock cried, and I
was afraid to meet my dear.

THE ONE FORGOTTEN

A SPIRIT speeding down on All Souls' Eve
From the wide gates of that mysterious shore
Where sleep the dead, sung softly and yet sweet.
"So gay a wind was never heard before,"
The old man said, and listened by the fire ;
And, "'Tis the souls that pass us on their way,"
The young maids whispered, clinging side by side,
So left their glowing nuts awhile to pray.

Still the pale spirit, singing through the night,
Came to this window, looking from the dark
Into the room ; then passing to the door,
Where crouched the whining dog, afraid to bark,
Tapped gently without answer, pressed the latch,
Pushed softly open, and then tapped once more.
The maidens cried, when seeking for the ring,
"How strange a wind is blowing on the door !"

And said the old man, crouching to the fire :
"Draw close your chairs, for colder falls the night ;
Push fast the door, and pull the curtains to,
For it is dreary in the moon's pale light."
And then his daughter's daughter with her hand
Passed over salt and clay to touch the ring,
Said low, "The old need fire, but ah ! the young
Have that within their heart to flame and sting."

And then the spirit, moving from her place,
Touched there a shoulder, whispered in each ear,
Bent by the old man, nodding in his chair,
But no one heeded her, or seemed to hear.
Then crew the black cock, and so weeping sore
She went alone into the night again,
And said the greybeard, reaching for his glass,
"How sad a wind blows on the window-pane!"

And then from dreaming the long dreams of age
He woke, remembering, and let fall a tear :
"Alas ! I have forgot—and have you gone ?—
I set no chair to welcome you, my dear."
And said the maidens, laughing in their play,
"How he goes groaning, wrinkled-faced and hoar,
He is so old, and angry with his age—
Hush ! hear the banshee sobbing past the door."

THE FLIGHT OF THE WILD GEESE

WRAPT in the darkness of the night,
Gathering in silence on the shore,
Wild geese flown from hiding on the hills
(Hark! the wolf-hound; thrice he howled before),
Wild geese with forest leaves tangled in their hair.
Is that blood on the heaving breasts of some,
Or dull red clay from fox-deserted lair?
Why thus so stealthy do they come?
Wild geese, women's arms round you in the darkness;
Women's hearts forbid to cry though they break;
Little children must not sob in their kissing;
"Brother, forever? O hush thee, for God's sake!"
Wild geese with fierce eyes, deathless hope in your
 hearts,
Stretching your strong white wings eager for your
 flight.
These women's eyes will watch your swift returning.
(Thrice the banshee cried in the stormy night).

Flinging the salt from their wings, and despair from their
 hearts,
They arise on the breast of the storm with a cry and are
 gone.
When will you come home, wild geese, with your
 thousand strong?
(The wolf-dog loud in the silence of night howls on.)
Not the fierce wind can stay your return or tumultuous
 sea,
Nor the freedom France gives to your feet on her luxuriant
 shore.

THE FLIGHT OF THE WILD GEESE 123

No smiles for your love like the tears of your sorrowing
land,
Only Death in his reaping could make you return no
more.
White birds, white birds, I dream of that glad home-
coming ;
Though human eyes could not mark your silent flight,
Women lie face down with clenched hands in the sea.
(Thrice the banshee cries in the stormy night.)

THE BANSHEE

Now God between us and all harm,
For I to-night have seen
A banshee in the shadow pass
Along the dark boreen.

And as she went she keened and cried
And combed her long white hair,
She stopped at Molly Reilly's door,
And sobbed till midnight there.

And is it for himself she moans,
Who is so far away?
Or is it Molly Reilly's death
She cries until the day?

Now Molly thinks her man is gone
A sailor lad to be ;
She puts a candle at her door
Each night for him to see.

But he is off to Galway town,
(And who dare tell her this ?)
Enchanted by a woman's eyes,
Half-maddened by her kiss.

So as we go by Molly's door
We look towards the sea,
And say, " May God bring home your lad,
Wherever he may be."

I pray it may be Molly's self
The banshee keens and cries,
For who dare breathe the tale to her,
Be it her man who dies ?

But there is sorrow on the way,
For I to-night have seen
A banshee in the shadow pass
Along the dark boreen.

THE WIND ON THE HILLS

Go not to the hills of Erinn
When the night winds are about,
Put up your bar and shutter,
And so keep the danger out.

For the good-folk whirl within it,
And they pull you by the hand,
And they push you on the shoulder,
Till you move to their command.

And lo ! you have forgotten
What you have known of tears,
And you will not remember
That the world goes full of years ;

A year there is a lifetime,
And a second but a day,
And an older world will meet you
Each morn you come away.

Your wife grows old with weeping,
And your children one by one
Grow grey with nights of watching,
Before your dance is done.

And it will chance some morning
You will come home no more ;
Your wife sees but a withered leaf
In the wind about the door.

And your children will inherit
The unrest of the wind,
They shall seek some face elusive,
And some land they never find.

When the wind is loud, they sighing
Go with hearts unsatisfied,
For some joy beyond remembrance,
For some memory denied.

And all your children's children,
They cannot sleep or rest,
When the wind is out in Erinn
And the sun is in the West.

ALL SOULS' EVE

I CRIED all night to you,
I called till day was here ;
Perhaps you could not come,
Or were too tired, dear.

Your chair I set by mine,
I made the dim hearth glow,
I whispered, "When he comes
I shall not let him go."

I closed the shutters tight,
I feared the dawn of day,
I stopped the busy clock
That timed your hours away.

Loud howled my neighbour's dog,
O glad was I to hear !
The dead are going by,
Now you will come, my dear,

To take the chair by mine—
Until the cock do crow—
O, if it be you came
And could not let me know !

For once a shadow passed
Behind me in the room,
I thought your loving eyes
Would meet mine in the gloom.

And once I thought I heard
A footstep by my chair,
I raised my eager hands,
But no sweet ghost was there.

We were too wide apart—
You in your spirit land—
I knew not when you came,
I could not understand.

Your eyes perhaps met mine,
Reproached me through the gloom,
Alas, for me alone
The empty, empty room !

The dead were passing home,
The cock crew loud and clear,
Mavourneen, if you came,
I knew not you were here.

IRELAND

'Twas the dream of a God,
And the mould of His hand,
That you shook 'neath His stroke,
That you trembled and broke
To this beautiful land.

Here He loosed from His hold
A brown tumult of wings,
Till the wind on the sea
Bore the strange melody
Of an Island that sings.

He made you all fair,
You in purple and gold,
You in silver and green,
Till no eye that has seen
Without love can behold.

I have left you behind
In the path of the past,
With the white breath of flowers
With the best of God's hours,
I have left you at last.

A BIRD FROM THE WEST

At the grey dawn, amongst the falling leaves,
A little bird outside my window swung,
High on a topmost branch he trilled his song,
And "Ireland ! Ireland ! Ireland !" ever sung.

"Take me," I cried, "back to my island home ;
Sweet bird, my soul shall ride between thy wings";
For my lone spirit wide his pinions spread,
And "Home" and "Home" and "Home" he ever
sings.

We lingered over Ulster stern and wild.
I called : "Arise ! doth none remember me ?"
One turned in the darkness murmuring,
"How loud upon the breakers sobs the sea !"

We rested over Connaught—whispering said :
"Awake, awake, and welcome ! I am here."
One woke and shivered at the morning grey :
"The trees, I never heard them sigh so drear."

We flew low over Munster. Low I wept :
"You used to love me, love me once again !"
They spoke from out the shadows wondering :
"You'd think of tears, so bitter falls the rain."

Long over Leinster lingered we. "Goodbye !
My best beloved, goodbye for evermore."
Sleepless they tossed and whispered to the dawn :
"So sad a wind was never heard before."

Was it a dream I dreamt ? For yet there swings
In the grey morn a bird upon the bough,
And "Ireland ! Ireland ! Ireland !" ever sings.
Oh ! fair the breaking day in Ireland now.

DEATH OF GORMLAITH

GORMLAITH, wife of Niall Glundu,
Happy was your dream that night,
Dreant you woke in sudden fright,
Niall of Ulster stood by you.

Niall of Ulster, dead and gone,
Many a year had come again,
Him who was in battle slain
Now your glad eyes rest upon.

Well your gaze caressed him o'er,
His dark head you loved so well,
Where the coulin curled and fell
On the clever brow he bore.

Those brave shoulders wide and strong,
Many a Dane had quaked to see,
Never phantom fair as he,—
Wife of Glundu, gazed so long.

Glad Queen Gormlaith, at the dawn
Up you sprang to draw him near,
Ah ! the grey cock loud and clear
Crew, and then the Ghost was gone.

Stretched your arms in vain request,
Slipped and fell, and wounded sore
Called his name, then spake no more,
For the bed-stick pierced your breast.

Queen, your smiling lips were dumb
With that last dear name you cried,
Yet some had it, ere you died,
Niall of Ulster whispered, "Come."

WHEN YOU ARE ON THE SEA

How can I laugh or dance as others do,
Or ply my rock or reel?
My heart will still return to dreams of you
Beside my spinning-wheel.

My little dog he cried out in the dark,
He would not whisht for me :
I took him to my side—why did he bark
When you were on the sea ?

I fear the red cock—if he crow to-night—
I keep him close and warm,
'Twere ill with me, if he should wake in fright
And you out in the storm.

I dare not smile for fear my laugh would ring
Across your dying ears ;
O, if you, drifting, drowned, should hear me sing
And think I had not tears !

I never thought the sea could wake such waves,
Nor that such winds could be ;
I never wept when other eyes grew blind
For some one on the sea.

But now I fear and pray all things for you,
How many dangers be !
I set my wheel aside, what can I do
When you are on the sea ?

THE MOUNTAIN MAID

HALF seated on a mossy crag,
Half crouching in the heather ;
I found a little Irish maid,
All in June's golden weather.

Like some fond hand that loved the child,
The wind tossed back her tresses ;
The heath-bells touched her unclad feet
With shy and soft caresses.

A mountain linnet flung his song
Into the air around her ;
But all in vain the splendid hour,
For deep in woe I found her.

"Ahone ! Ahone ! Ahone !" she wept,
The tears fell fast and faster ;
I sat myself beside her there,
To hear of her disaster.

Like dew on roses down her cheek
The diamond drops were stealing ;
She laid her two brown hands in mine,
Her trouble all revealing.

Alas ! Alas ! the tale she told
In Gaelic low and tender ;
A plague upon my Saxon tongue,
I could not comprehend her.

THE LITTLE SISTER

THE wind knocks at the window,
And my heart is full of fear,
For I know when it is calling
That some evil thing is near.

It whispers in the chimney,
And I strike the log to flame,
Lest it come down and take me
To the land that hath no name.

For once I had a sister,
Who now am left alone,
And here we sat together,
When the wind did sigh and moan.

There came a gentle knocking
Quick and sudden at the door,
And my sister hushed my terror,
Saying, "'Tis the wind, a-stór !"

She took my arms from round her,
She kissed me, cheek and chin,
But I cried, "Oh, little sister,
Do not let the robber in !"

She rose up from me laughing,
But her face was strange and white,
And she opened wide the window,
Looking long into the night.

And I said, "Oh, little sister,
There is on your cheek a tear!"
"'Tis but the rain," she whispered;
But my heart was full of fear.

And I said, "Oh, little sister,
There's a hand upon the door."
Soft she chid me from my crying,
Saying, "'Tis the wind, a-stór."

And turning from me smiling,
She took down the bar and chain,
But her cheek was like the lily
As she went into the rain.

And I said, "Oh, little sister,
Will you then return no more?"
But I only heard the pushing
Of the wind upon the door.

Long I cried, "Oh, little sister,
Will you soon come back again?"
But I only heard the beating
Of the storm upon the pane.

Now my mother sits in sorrow,
Weeping all the livelong day;
And I think she dreads the robber
Who did take her child away.

So I put up bar and shutter
When the wind goes howling by,
For I know when it comes knocking
That some evil thing is nigh.

I HAVE BEEN TO HY-BRASAIL

I HAVE been to Hy-Brasail,
And the Land of Youth have seen,
Much laughter have I heard there,
And birds amongst the green.

Many have I met there,
But no one ever old,
Yet I have left Hy-Brasail
Before my time was told.

Love have I known, too,
As I shall meet no more ;
Lost is the magic island,
And I cannot find the shore.

Since I have left Hy-Brasail,
Age has encompassed me,
She plucks me by the shoulder
And will not let me be.

Her face is grey and mournful,
Her hand is hard and cold,
Yet I have left Hy-Brasail
Before my time was told.

MY PRETTY CHILD

Mo páislin deas, I did not know
How cold the winter's blast could blow
Into her heart, with what despair
Earth drew her bloom and blossom fair,
How lone a man might come and go
When you were here—how could I know?

How could I know, my little child?
When gracious summer looked and smiled,
Soft was the sleeping roses' breath
Who did not know or dream of death.
Like him who stood in glad surprise
At love discovered in your eyes,
That fleeting time so slow could pass
I did not know, *mo páislin deas*.

My pretty child, I did not know
How I had watched you come and go,
How I had listened for your song,
How short your shy caress, how long
Your absence was, till praying I
Looked up to heaven with a cry
To call you back, there saw a star
And knew how far God's gardens are.

THE KINE OF MY FATHER

THE kine of my father, they are straying from my
keeping ;

The young goat's at mischief, but little can I do :
For all through the night did I hear the banshee
keening ;

O youth of my loving, and is it well with you ?

All through the night sat my mother with my sorrow ;
" Whisht, it is the storm, O one childeen of my heart !"
My hair with the wind, and my two hands clasped in
anguish ;

Black head of my darling ! too long are we apart.

Were your grave at my feet, I would think it half a
blessing ;

I could herd then the cattle, and drive the goats
away ;
Many a Paternoster I would say for your safe keeping ;
I could sleep above your heart until the dawn of day.

I see you on the prairie, hot with thirst and faint with
hunger ;

The head that I love lying low upon the sand.
The vultures shriek impatient, and the coyote dogs are
howling,
Till the blood is pulsing cold within your clenching
hand.

I see you on the waters, so white, so still, forsaken,
Your dear eyes unclosing beneath a foreign rain :
A plaything of the winds, you turn and drift unceasing,
No grave for your resting ; O mine the bitter pain !

All through the night did I hear the banshee keening :
Somewhere you are dying, and nothing can I do ;
My hair with the wind, and my two hands clasped in
anguish ;
Bitter is your trouble—and I am far from you.

LITTLE WHITE ROSE

LITTLE white rose that I loved, I loved,
 Roisin ban, Roisin ban !
Fair my bud as the morning's dawn.
I kissed my beautiful flower to bloom,
My heart grew glad for its rich perfume—
 Little white rose that I loved !

Little white rose that I loved grew red,
 Roisin rua, Roisin rua !
Passionate tears I wept for you.
Love is more sweet than the world's fame—
I dream you back in my heart the same,
 Little white rose that I loved !

Little white rose that I loved grew black,
 Roisin duv, Roisin duv !
So I knew not the heart of you.
Lost in the world's alluring fire,
I cry in the night for my heart's desire,
 Little white rose that I loved !

SPRING SONG : TO IRELAND

WEEP no more, heart of my heart, no more !
The night has passed and the dawn is here,
The cuckoo calls from the budding trees,
And tells us that Spring is near.

Sorrow no more, beloved, no more !
For see, sweet emblem of hope untold,
The tears that soft on the shamrocks fall
There turn to blossoms of gold.

Winter has gone with his blighting breath,
No more to chill thee with cold or fear,
The brook laughs loud in its liberty,
Green buds on the hedge appear.

Weep no more, life of my heart, no more !
The birds are carolling sweet and clear ;
The warmth of Summer is in the breeze,
And the Spring—the Spring is here.

TO-MORROW

SHE walks in a lonely garden
On the path her feet have made,
With high-heeled shoes, gold-buckled,
And gown of a flowered brocade ;

The hair that falls on her shoulders,
Half-held with a ribbon tie,
Once glowed like the wheat in autumn,
Now grey as a winter sky.

Time on her brow with rough fingers
Writes record of smiles and tears ;
Her mind, like a golden timepiece,
He stopped in the long past years.

At the foot of the lonely garden,
She comes to the trysting-place
She knew of old, there she lingers,
A blush on her withered face.

The children out on the common,
They climb to the garden wall,
And laugh, " He will come to-morrow ! "
Who never will come at all.

And often over our sewing,
As I and my neighbour sit
We gossip over this story
That never had end to it,

"He is dead," I say, "that lover,
Who left her so long ago,"
My neighbour rests her needle
To answer, "He's false I know.

"For could it be he were sleeping,
With love that was such as this
He'd break through the gates of silence,
And hurry to meet her kiss."

Is she best worth tears or laughter,
This dame in her old brocade?
My neighbour says she is holy,
With her faith that will not fade.

.
The children out on the common,
They answer her dreary call,
And say, "He will come to-morrow!"
Who never will come at all.

THE OLD VIOLON

“GOING, going!” the voice was loud,
And, rising, silenced the chattering crowd.
“Going! going! shall it be gone?”
The auctioneer held up an old violon.
“The mute though tarnished is silver still
The aged strings have not lost their skill.”
They laughed in scorn as he praised the case,
The ebon nuts and the polished face—
Jokingly betted together that none
Could draw a tune from the old violon,
When lo! from out of their midst appeared
A man of countenance strange and weird,
With gentle touch laid his thin hand on
The polished face of the old violon.
“Thou scorned, thou worthless!” the stranger said,
“Wake, heart of music, art thou too dead?”
As though some spirit long slept awoke,
A faint, low sigh from his fingers broke.
He took the bow in his trembling hand,
So old was he that he scarce could stand,
And still as death grew the auction hall,
For fear and silence fell over all.
They knew, as they watched in awed surprise,
He read their hearts with his piercing eyes,
And graven there in the long ago
Each story that sprang from beneath his bow.
He sang of love, and then years of pain
Rolled back—they dreamt they were young again;

The wife looked up to her husband's face,
And once more saw there the manly grace
That won her love when her heart was young
(Ah ! 'twas the past that the violon sung) ;
And he looked back and saw once more
The faded cheek was as fresh as of yore ;
Out from his eyes beamed the old love-light,
And taking her hand, he pressed it tight.
The violon's song all sweet did soar—
A mother cried for the babe she bore,
And stretching her empty arms out wide,
She felt no longer her wish denied ;
The downy head lay upon her breast,
The tiny hands her pale cheek caressed,
To her lonely heart joy and comfort fell
From those wordless lips that can plead so well.
The violon's song rang loud and clear :
They saw a garden all fair appear,
Perfumed with roses and blossoms white,
Lifting their heads to the sun's hot light.
A statue stood there amidst them all—
A cry of wonder went down the hall—
For at its base, kneeling all alone,
Pressing warm lips to the feet of stone,
Raising soft hands to the face above,
A maiden was breathing her soul in love.
Gold-hearted lilies and roses sweet
She culled and laid at the statue's feet,
But touching the stone each flower would die.
The maid arose with a mournful cry,
And glanced in fear round the garden fair :
It was weeds and thorns that flourished there.
" O love," she cried, " I am sore afraid—
The night has come and my blossoms fade."
Raising her arms to the stony face,
The statue fell at her slight embrace ;
Down at her feet her idol lay—
An empty shell was this broken clay.
Amidst the fragments she sought to find

Her god of beauty, her love so kind,
Her faith, her hopes, that were scattered all ;
Her cry was echoed within the hall ;
And one gentle face so pale it grew,
That those who saw it her story knew.

Then of the present the violon sang.
No words it gave them yet as it rang ;
Each heart gave words to the wondrous lay :
" The living present is ours to-day."
And now they shudder and hold their breath ;
The violon's song is the song of death—
Death in most cruel and dreadful guise—
The god of war rose before their eyes.
The clash of arms filled the auction hall,
For blood seemed around and over all,
Each woman shrank to her husband's side,
He clenched his hand as he rose and cried,
The cry of battle, the eagle's cry,
That sights his quarry from far on high,
His heart beat quick with the lust for blood ;
He fain would seek in that ruddy flood
To quench that fierce, unsatiable thirst
With which man and beast are alike accurst.

And now a moment, so strange and still
They seemed enchained to the violon's will—
So silent all that an echo flew
From the sobbing breath that a strong man drew—
When sudden there broke a fearful cry
That seemed to quiver across the sky,
A cry of some soul, it was to those
Who heard it, a soul in life's last throes,
A cold, passing breath from death's black wings,
A crash of discord o'er broken strings ;
And what had been was now no more,
Silence and death seemed to cloud them o'er ;
The past, the present, all men may see,
But no man knoweth what is to be.

Again they start with a new surprise,
No minstrel is there to their wildered eyes ;
From whence he came or whither he fled,
Or of the living, or of the dead,
Their wondering hearts have never known.
The violon lay on the desk alone.
Fearing to lose, yet afraid to win,
Their voices rise, and above their din—
“Going ! going ! ’tis gone ! ’tis gone ;
A rare Stradivarius this old violon.
Behold !” and the auctioneer thought to raise
It high in his hand as he sung its praise—
With a faint, low sob, like a passing bell,
To dust ’neath his touch the violon fell.

THE LEPER'S BETROTHED

To clasp his spirit undefiled, my spirit leaped beneath
my hand,

He said no sad reproach to me, but only, "Love, I
understand."

O coward my eyes that would not see, held slaves
'neath closing finger-tips ;

O coward my flesh that would not let my spirit's
whisper through your lips.

He might have said, "This rose I pulled fell not to
pieces at my touch ;

The robin fled not at my gaze, nor hid from me her
feathered clutch ;

The evening moon arose as fair with my sad face to
look upon ;

The sun withdrew no single ray, caressed me as it
shone ;

The hound still follows at my heel, nor finds me less
beloved for this—

But, oh ! my love shrinks from my side and trembles
at my kiss.

Would you find horror at my touch, or poison at my
body's breath,

If but my flesh grew fair again, and my soul darkened
with its death ?"

God struck him with a fell disease, he said no sad
reproach to me,

He left the world of men behind for that sad isle
beyond the sea ;

He loved the beautiful, the sun—and God has robbed
him of that right,
Housed him with men that are not men, with horrors
for his sight.
And I, my love ! have robbed from you the right of
love, and hope, and trust,
And gave a woman's feeble dreams that God has razed
to dust.
Oh, pity me, for I am weak, not worth that precious
love you gave,
I weep undoing, while your ship finds you an island
and a grave ;
I curse my flesh that holds me down, my hidden face,
my cowardly hand ;
I bless the parting voice that said, " My love, I under-
stand."

MONICA

PARDON give to Monica,
She is so very fair—
Though soft eyes give promises
Rosy lips forswear.
From the shy droop of her head,
You a hope might take ;
In the hiding cheek, beware,
The dainty dimples wake.
Pardon give to Monica.

Pardon give to Monica,
The havoc of her eyes,
Yours they will not shun or seek,—
There the mischief lies.
If the flirting lashes thus
Make your day and night,
Would the loosing of your bonds
Give your heart respite ?
Pardon give to Monica.

Pardon give to Monica,
She is so very fair.
What those cruel lips may say,
Roguish eyes forswear.
What knight's heart amid ye all
Were not glad to break,
That the lips with pity droop,
While eyes their laughter take ?
Pardon give to Monica.

LOVE IN DISGUISE

I MOURNED beneath the willow tree,
When shrouded came a nymph to me
And slid her hand in mine.
Her boldness I did much upbraid,
And said : " Begone, thou wanton maid ;
I seek no love of thine !

" Nor do I hope to wake again
My heart all stricken with disdain,
And drive it forth to woo.
No ! no ! Forlorn I sit and sigh,
And call on Death to let me die,
Since Phyllis is untrue."

" Ah ! " cried the maid, " why therefore chide,
Since I indeed am fitting bride
For one so pale and wan ? "
She held me in a close embrace,
Nor could I see her hidden face,
And still I cried : " Begone ! "

" If thou art Love, thy labour's vain ;
I hold thy boldness in disdain,
I care no more to woo.
But be thou Death, for whom I cry,
Thy lover then indeed am I,
Since Phyllis is untrue."

"Oh ! I am Love," she whispered low,
"And fain I too with Death would go ;
My lover—cold is he,
Who bids me fly the trysting-place."
She raised the veil from off her face—
My Phyllis smiled on me !

THE LOVER'S ALMANAC

OH, hearts that wear the willow,
To you I tell my woe,
Why thus uncared, ungartered,
And all so pale I go.

Come, you wan lovers sighing
Who too have felt the thorn,
But let none heart-whole linger
To laugh my grief to scorn.

Demure in church on Sunday
My love I chanced to see,
Amidst her gentle praying
I vow she looked on me.

On Monday in the meadow
I lingered by the stile,
She did but touch my fingers,
And passed me with a smile.

On Tuesday, mute and rosy,
I stood upon her way,
My heart it nigh betrayed me,
"Good-morrow," did she say.

With blushing cheek on Wednesday
Her path she went all slow ;
How feared I such a fair maid ?—
I could not move to go.

On Thursday, brave and daring,
I vowed I'd speak her fair,
She turned her glances from me,
And passed me, head in air.

All pale on Friday morning
I waited by her path,
She flashed her eyes upon me,
And pierced me with their wrath.

On Saturday, if that day
Should ever dawn for me,
I'll die for cruel Chloris
Beneath the cypress-tree.

TO MONA

WHEN dainty Mona walks this way
My foolish heart will beat,
And leaves me, though I turn aside,
To lie beneath her feet.

It follows her all up and down
More faithfully, I wis,
Than that be-ribboned spaniel which
She honours with a kiss !

And when all chidden by her frown
My heart creeps back to me,
It holds my breast a prison-house
And would again be free.

CECILIA'S WAY

LIGHTED by the lady moon,
Breezes blow and aspens quiver,
By the stream's enchanted tune
Singing to the distant river,
Walks Cecilia.

Such an hour for love and song,
Lover's kiss and maiden's laughter.
Who would wish the night less long
Or fail to weep it back hereafter ?
Sighs Cecilia.

Neath the aspen moves a shade,—
Shadow dark ! The saints defend her !
Any lass would fly afraid
On the wings that fear would lend her !
Smiles Cecilia.

Who would brave the shaping gloom,
Hiding form and hidden face,
Phantom arms that would entomb,
Who dares go to that embrace ?—
Why, Cecilia.

A CARELESS HEART

THE wind has blown my heart away
All on a summer holiday.
If you can find it, pray you tell,
For this is how the loss befell :

If you will now my tale believe,
I wore my heart upon my sleeve,
So came it that, alack the day !
The wind did blow my heart away.

TO CLARISSA

CLARISSA, when you passed me by
With scornful lip and haughty eye,
 My fault I did deplore,
Your anger, like a poisoned dart,
Struck death into my guilty heart,
 I vowed to sin no more.

Clarissa, when you did forgive
And bid my fainting heart to live,
 Nor killed me with disdain,
So soft your eye, so sweet your lip,
Where like a bee I hung to sip,
 I fain would sin again.

CUPID SLAIN

I COME from a burial ;
Hush ! let me be :
I have put away my love,
Fair exceedingly.

Ah ! the little gold curls
Soft about his face ;
Now my heart is sorrowful
For his sleeping-place.

But he would pursue me,
Never let me rest ;
Till I turned and slew him,
Knowing it were best.

Laid his bow beside him,
Shovelled in the clay ;
To-morrow I'll forget him ;
Let me weep to-day.

THE WRECKAGE

Love lit a beacon in thine eyes,
And I out in the storm,
And lo ! the night had taken wings ;
I dream me safe and warm.

Love lit a beacon in thine eyes,
A wreckers' light for me ;
My heart is broken on the rocks ;
I perish in the sea.

A TRAGI-COMEDY

'Twas on a gloomy afternoon
When all the world was out of tune,
And lover's lot amiss,
When Chloe, waiting by the stream,
Awoke from love's too pleasant dream,
Of half Elysian bliss.

The cause, the same that shook the skies,
And closed the gates of Paradise
On one presumptuous soul.
A jealous heart beat in her breast,
And thrust her out from happiness,
All weeping in her dole.

What stayed her lover's laggard feet?
The trysting hour had gone too fleet.
She vowed him all untrue.
Her frisking spaniel to her side
She held, and would not be denied
For all that he could do.

"Poor beast!" quoth she, "alas! I go
To seek my death the waves below,
Since love's a foolish dream.
I shall not leave thee here alone,
To make thy sad and piteous moan."
She flung him in the stream.

Loosed from her hand, the spaniel sank,
Then scrambled whining to the bank,
And did refuse to drown.
He shook his silken coat of spray,
Then, all forgiving, leaped to play—
She chid him with a frown.

“ Ungrateful beast ! ” she sore did cry,
“ Since all alone I now must die,
And leave thee lost behind,
Go seek a lady to whose heart
Has come no pang of Cupid’s dart,
To be a mistress kind.

“ Nor find the lover for a friend
Who brought to this most cruel end
A maid who held him true.
Begone ! Nor add another tear,
For this poor heart that held thee dear ;
Thou art most faithless too ! ”

Then Chloe to the gloomy skies
Did turn her blue and tear-dimmed eyes,
In passion and despair.
“ If there were one who loved me well,
And who for me, what else befell,
Would greatly do and dare ;

“ Who with no selfish passions rife,
Would hold me dearer than his life,
Without a hope of gain :
Then kindly heavens intercede,
And send, to stay a cruel deed,
This most unselfish swain.”

There came from out the gloomy skies
No answer to her doleful cries,
Fool was she so to dream.’

Her silken locks of golden hair
She wound across her face all fair,
And flung her in the stream.

But stay ! A champion to her side,
Has plunged within the shallow tide,
In answer to her moan.
The spaniel in the water's strife
Did for this most beloved life
Nigh sacrifice his own.

Where grew the reeds all high and rank,
Beyond the bending of the bank,
He brought her to the shore.
There where her lover with his net
Did in his fishing all forget
The trysting hour was o'er.

He to her side right quickly ran—
With swift invention of a man,
A tale did soon supply.
Of all—but truth—did he relate,
That kept his eager feet so late ;
To leave her was to die.

He kissed her cheek, he kissed her chin,
His cloak he wrapped her body in,
And knelt him at her side.
He swore, as men are apt to do,
That were she dead he'd follow too
And drown within the tide.

And then, because a smile did break
About the dimples in her cheek,
He chid her cruelty.
In fine, his anger all awoke,
With this he played the master-stroke,
And found his conscience free.

That she should deem him false, untrue,
Who loved, as never others do,
His dear, his only dove !
He said—as such are prone to say—
“Through all his years for one brief day
He hath no other love.”

And she for this fond faith would give
No sweet return, not even live,
But fling her in the tide !
And here his voice did fail and break,
He trembled on the words he spake,
And turned his face aside.

Because a tear stood in his eye,
She did herself accuse and cry,
As all poor women will.
Her crime he promised to forgive,
Since for no other did he live ;
O'er all he loved her still.

Did she his story quite believe
Or hold him guiltless to deceive,
Because she wanted to ?
I do not know, but only this—
The quarrel ended in a kiss,
As may all others do.

As for the champion—Heaven sent,
With their sweet joy was he content,
Although he was forgot ?
The teasing fly that flitted past
He snapped and slew upon the grass,
All happy with his lot.

THE ENCHANTED LAKE

I FOUND a dark enchanted lake,
That lay within a lonely glade ;
I stood a moment, held entranced,
Hid 'neath the willow's purple shade.

The moon cast down her silver nets,
As slow she sailed the misty blue,
And in their twisting coil and mesh
The leaping waters softly drew.

Like some young nun, vain in the night,
The white magnolia blossom bent
All timid down her face to view
Within that favoured element.

" Why from rough seas did Venus rise,
And wherefore let her beauty glow
From chill embraces of the wave,
If she this fairy spot did know ? "

I thought : " From this enchanted lake,
That holds the heavens on its heart,
Should she have risen in the night
And flung the clinging waves apart. "

Lo ! as I spoke the purple shade
Rang out in some sweet elfin tune,
And singing 'neath my gaze, a nymph
Flashed in the pale net of the moon.

"Ye gods, look down," I knelt and cried :
"This scented pool is sure a cup
Lost from your board, upon whose lip
A precious pearl is offered up.

"Or if they sleep, O nymph, on me
Some pity take, and seek the shore,
Or draw me in your white embrace
Down to your home for evermore."

For one sweet moment did she stand,
A gleaming statue washed in tears ;
Her snowy breast alone did tell
The tragic tumult of her fears.

Then, like some bird who feels a wound,
She gave her voice to little cries,
But ere she fluttered to the shade
She looked on me with Laura's eyes.

Ah ! This white fairy of the lake,
Who by her magic did entrance,
Held one brief moment my poor heart,
All faithless, only by a glance.

To you, my Laura, ever true,
Who now pass by with much disdain,
And will not listen to my vows,
But let me plead, and plead in vain ;

Who turn away with blushing cheek
And head averted at my sigh,
Whose scornful laughter chills my heart,
So that I pine, and soon must die.

Ah ! who beside that sheltered lake
Did thus my secret love surprise ?
I swear the nymph was nought to me,
Save that she looked with Laura's eyes.

WINTER IN SUMMER

ALL in a bleak December
My heart had summer-time ;
Crouched by the glowing ember,
We found an Eden's clime.
The storm that shook the casements
Made laughter in my ears ;
No frown thy gloom, December,
Sweet rain that was not tears.

All in the month of roses
My heart is like to die ;
Now winter's gloom encloses,
We thought it passed us by ;
And so my young companions
Fall laughing back from me :
For dreary melancholy
Is no good company.

O who can smile in summer,
When winter rules their heart ?—
When pleading lips grow dumb, or
Clasped hands fall apart ?
White cheeks more chill than snowing,
Dull eyes so full of rain,
Pale lips that part for sighing,
Where is your summer's gain ?

Or who'd weep in December,
Whose heart with summer glows ?
O who would e'er remember
Bare branches, or the rose ?
Smooth cheeks flush pink as blossoms,
Red lips and laughter rhyme ;
O would June were December,
I wot 'twas summer-time.

LAST EVE

LAST eve as I leaned from my lattice, looked out at the
night
Where the grey of the sea misted into the grey of the
skies,
Came with quick beating of wings and long sorrowful
cries
Beautiful birds, and I wept, being blind with their white.

How the wind's strong invisible hands beat on doorway
and pane,
And the sea seemed to writhe and roar in an anguish
of thought !
How the moon's frightened face looking down seemed
to shun what she sought,
Hid so pale in cloud fingers to weep in a passion of
rain !

They had come in the night and the storm, winging
back to my breast,
These hopes that were hopeless, these dreams that
were ever as dreams ;
Rending my heart with sharp beaks and their passion-
ate screams,
Leashing my soul with the storm from its haven of rest.

Night long did I put them away, did they turn again,
Till the tumultuous waves bore them out in their
creepy recess,
Tossed them back on the reef with a deadly pretence
of caress ;
Flung up by the hand of the sea, beaten back by the
lash of the rain.

birds, it is over and done, your last passion has
paled ;

The world has no place for your flight nor my heart
for your screams.

O hopes that were hopeless, sweet dreams that were
ever as dreams,

Let go ! get back to your graves, you have fought and
have failed.

GOODBYE

AND so goodbye, my love, my dear, and so goodbye,
E'en thus from my sad heart go hence, depart ;
I cast thee out, renounce, and hold no more ;
I wreck the cup of joy thou heldest for drinking
To my lips, thinking we'd quaff—be as before ;
Yet at my laughter if thou hearest sigh,
And ask no question " Why ? "
Believing only that my pleasure lies
To find approval in thy pleased eyes.

Before our time, my dear, my dear, Fate so had planned
Our little race to run beneath the sun,
That we should meet and love and dream, then separate.
Perchance, she thought, though, there would be no
parting,
No salt tears smarting ; she deemed to mate
My most imperfect self to thine, and gain
A better harvesting of pain :
I weep, but null is Fate's decree—
Such tears fall not so bitterly.

I saw a woman once undo and then peruse
Old letters with hard eyes ; through such disguise
I pierced and knew her weeping.
" And such he was," she said, " whose is the failing
That love is paling ? which is the soul that's sleeping ? "
His step ; and quick the letters put in hiding :
They meet with cold eyes chiding.
If I were such as she,
Oh, death were well for me !

I saw a man's grey eyes fill up, and overfull
Let fall two sparkling tears, as one who fears ;
Draw forth a curling braid of woman's hair,
Lay it across his lips with swift caressing,
His love confessing : " My sweet beyond compare,
Whose fault we love to-day and hate to-morrow ? "
Her voice : he hides his sorrow,
And meets her bitterly ;
And oh, if thou wert he !

I saw two children wondering, hand in hand,
Sit dumb beside their hearth, as if their mirth
Were stricken by some fear past understanding ;
Find in their parents' eyes with silent reading
The old degrading truth beyond commanding—
The bond of love that held two hates united,
They plead still unrequited,
They grow and bear the thorn—
Oh, better never born !

Better if thou wert dead, my dear, if thou wert dead ;
No woman's moan but mine should hush thy sleeping.
When other eyes should close, their watch forgetting,
Mine vain regretting still their watch was keeping ;
When other hearts grew weary by death's gates,
Stole to their loves and hates,
Mine still lived for its laughter
In what might come hereafter.

Goodbye ! I would not have thee dead. We grasped at
stars
That only God could take : we tried to make
A paradise for keeping
Upon an earth where He had wrecked the garden ;
Giving no pardon, baptized us all in weeping.
So pass ; goodbye ! Some other woman's love,
Oh ! not as great as mine, will find above
Some happier fate to choose you
Than mine that did refuse you.

SEEKING

THERE I cannot find thee, O my love !
In the city's clamour,
In its pleasure's glamour ;
'Mid the multitude of faces
Or the wilderness of places
There I cannot find thee, O my love !

There I cannot find thee, O my love !
Where corn groweth yellow,
Where luscious fruits come mellow,
Where 'neath the roses swinging
Hide birds that wake to singing,
There I cannot find thee, O my love !

There I cannot find thee, O my love !
Where sweeps the snowy pinion
O'er the seamew's wide dominion ;
Where the gull unceasingly
Screams a chorus to the sea,
There I cannot find thee, O my love !

There I cannot find thee, O my love !
Blind in the dark my seeking,
I stand with lone heart breaking,
And with hushed and listening breath
I gaze through the gates of death—
There I cannot seek thee, O my love !

THE END OF THE WORLD

EVEN the silent lips and comforting calm face
I had no more ; I took my place
Still wondering, behind the slow sad coach that bore
All of your beauty Death could rob from me,
One amongst many men who followed thee.

“Now comes an end of things,” I said, and faced the
light
And saw the sun ; there was not any night
Although the sands of your sweet life had run.
Even the little children, in their glee,
Raced by the four slow steeds that carried thee.

The curious passer's gaze I watched with jealous eyes
Your coffin find, through its disguise
Of living flowers ; you from their careless pity safe
behind
Those wooden walls ; oh, safe, my dear, no one shall
see,
Or none remember, save those who follow thee.

Even the little birds and blossoming spring flowers,
They did not care, and still the hours
Went on to weave slow days to years for me to bear.
No song was hushed, no laughter stilled for me,
No woman wept when my world died with thee.

AVE MARIA

In the darkness of the night I wake and weep,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !
Dread shapes crowd around me, I cannot sleep,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !

Love that must separate, Death that takes all,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !
Comes in the darkness with shuddering footfall,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !

Stern seems the face of the Lord and turned away,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !
For my prayerless night and my deedless day,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !

Thou art meek and full of mercy—pray for me,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !
He will listen to my prayer for love of thee,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !

Say that the world's hot dust was in my eyes,
Ave Maria, hear my prayer !
Say that my ears were deaf with city cries,
Ave Maria, hear my prayer !

Say to that man and beast so questionèd,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !
That on the cross He hung beloved but dead,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !

In the darkness of the night I wake and weep,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !
All that I am not drives my soul from sleep,
Ave Maria, hear my cry !

ONE WHO IS DEAD

NEVER again, my darling, never again,
Till the gates of God are open for me to pass,
May we join our parted hands that loosed their hold,
Ere Death's cold fingers closed on thine. Alas !
Feeling palm from palm was slipping in fingers' hold,
Had you but spoken or I shed a tear,
This had not been, but now you have forgot,
And I remember only I held you dear.

REMORSE

"WHERE have you been, my pale, pale son, all night in
the winter storm?"

(Hark! the joy bells chime in their passionate rhyme.)

"O mother! the bird is sheltered, the beast housed
warm—

And they, with their bodies' comfort, are thus content;
But I, in debt for a soul, have the long night spent
In shunning the question of God, till the spirit within
Fought mad through the human walls of my quivering
skin

At its kindred passion without in the howling night.

'Where is thy brother?' O question not giving
respite.

O mother! what do they answer, those lips, blood red,
Of Nature, in sport with her thousand deaths? I ques-
tioned.

'Send me an answer.' She spoke not, the Mother of
Death,

Life rocked in her restless arms, while she sucked at
her breath—

('Where?' the bells cry, and I dare not reply.)"

"What would you tell me, my child, my child, that
once slept a babe on my breast?"

(Do the death bells toll for a passing soul?)

"O mother! my friend is dead, now I stand confessed.
I can strike the stone into flame, make the dark give
light,

But I cannot give back to the tiniest bird its flight,

I can easily shut life's gates, but God alone holds the key ;
And all the darkness of night cannot shelter me.
For my friend, you understand, my friend is dead,
So people will pity the tears that my hot eyes shed.
No voice to cry 'Guilty,' not seeing my brain's red
shame—
Not knowing that 'Dead,' in my heart, hath another
name.
He wondered the world should plot him such mischief
and pain ;
Knew not that his world was worked from one jealous
man's brain,
Whose hands set in motion the wheels, laid his heart
on the rack,
Followed ever with murmurs of doubt on his fortunate
track,
Till the world, more eager to listen to evil than good,
Caught my whispers to hurl them back on the man as
he stood.
Crept scandal, with listening ears, to his keyhole, sup-
plied
Quick rumour with news for the keen appetites so
denied ;
And hungry excitement kept hard on his quicksilver
feet,
Till men, self-comparing, and finding comparing were
sweet,
Would say, 'Look at this man,'—meaning, look what
a contrast there be—
Or, 'So has he sinned, see to him (so your gaze avoid
me).'

Foolish world, as if men were not judged by each
different mind,
By God's justice, not that of the world's great classing
of kind :
'This is right, that is wrong,' as though minds were all
made on one plan,
Leaving nought to inheritance, will-power, or surround-
ings of man,

He is dead, mother, dead ; I his friend might have made
 his earth fair,
 But I crept like a scorpion to sting all his hopes to
 despair :
 Robbed his body of this world's joys, and his soul of
 the hope
 Of that other that sings through the air at the pull of
 the rope,
 Till my mad passion swells at the tongues of the bells."

" Hush thee and listen, my son, my son, for the bells
 are the voice of love."

(All the things He made live can their Father forgive.)

" O mother ! a sinner's cry may be heard above.

And so, if the dead forgive, then my dying breath
 Will plead that a sad soul pass through the gates of
 death,

Where it stood outside so weary, afraid to call,
 For that pale ghost standing within in his funeral pall,
 Awaiting my tears that would wash his stained record
 white,

And I could not weep ; but, mother, I weep to-night."

(Peace, the bells sing, is God's reckoning.)

ECLIPSE

So for the luxury of the flesh, wrap it in fur of fox that
it be warm,
In the bear's coat sheltering its nakedness from storm.
Give wine for its hot veins, fame for its throne, and
laughter for its lips,
All ends in one eclipse,
Sunshine or snows.
We gain a grave, and afterwards—God knows.

Bemoan beside your fire your own particular fate, that
evil wind
That blows for you no mercy, think till the wearied
mind
Doth ease itself in tears, or reason from her high throne
slips,
So ends life in eclipse,
However the wind blows,
We gain a grave, and afterwards—God knows.

“And wherefore is all this?” you question me, “this
weighing of rich and poor,
Of many tears and laughter of which no mind hath
cure?”
Nought save 'twere thinking for a winter's night, till my
mind trips
O'er thought and finds eclipse
For smiles and woes,
And I a grave, and afterwards—God knows.

A RECOMPENSE

I RAISED my hands against my fate,
I struck her frowning brows between ;
“ I will be good, I will be great,
No matter what has been.

“ What care I if before my time
Dead men their passions left to me ?
Can I not tune my life to rhyme
From discord played by thee ? ”

She struck my pencil from my grasp,
And here my first ambition ends.
How bitterly the loss unmans !
She had so many friends.

Love saw my battle and was glad ;
For love's sweet sake I struggled on,
Till love grew tired loving, then
I cursed the sun that shone.

“ I'll strive no more against my fate,”
I said, “ I will give up, go down ”—
But friendship caught my idle hands
And would not let me drown.

For friendship's sake I tried once more,
Till love stole friendship from my side ;
I cursed the friend that gained the boon
That was to me denied.

The hound that followed at my heel
Looked up with eyes so full of love
I kissed the curly brows between
And blessed the God above.

BUT FOR THE TEARS

"THE World were a place to play in," said the children,

"The playground of the present ; all that is have we,
No past is ours to sorrow,

No clouding thought of morrow,
And joy is slow in passing where we be.

With knowledge of a soul's right scarce awake,
Life had no fears :

The World were good to play in," said the children,
" But for the tears."

"The World were good to love in," said the youth.

"With a future all our own to dream and do,

With a fate for our soul's making,

Fame for our manhood's taking,

And Hope will never shun as we pursue.

Crowned with knowledge of a soul our calm and fair
horizon clears ;

And the World were good to love in," said the youth,

" But for the tears."

"The World were good to die in," said the aged,

"When lost years come to haunt you with their groans,

When dead dreams won't be stilled,

And hopes long unfulfilled

Beat on your bleeding heart nor heed its moans.

With knowledge of a soul's right gained and lost,

Less love endears

Some little your poor flesh : O welcome, death, to age,

Save for those tears."

THE TEMPEST

COME, teasing wind, we will fly,
Seek our heart's desire, you and I ;
Fit comrade for me,
Thou breath of liberty,
 I sigh for the freedom of your wings.
The sea will make us horses for our speed,
The fields will give the perfume of their seed,
In the woods a sweet rose blowing,
We will scatter it in going,
 And bear the lark up sunward as he sings.

Go ! we must part, you and I ;
Not *this* my heart's desire, so goodbye !
Had I thought a moment's madness
Had wrought so dire a sadness,
 My soul had never sorrowed for thy wings.
What have the tossing waves found for their play ?
Have mercy, let the white face hide away !
In the fields a harvest dead,
In the woods life's promise fled,
 And the lark is blown seaward as he sings.

Far better you were sleeping, O my soul,
Than that your coming forth a moment stole
From another's heart its rest.
Die you silent in my breast
 And seek in death that answer life denied :
Lest a dying voice should curse instead of pray,
Lest a heart should shadow, blighted of its May,
Lest a soul glad of its light
Should be plunged in gloom of night,
 Be in the World's seeing satisfied.

I WOULD HAVE WEPT

I WOULD have wept with the beast,
The bird, the blossoming flower,
The hundred years of the oak,
Or the insect born for an hour,

Saying with my soul's right :
Ah, woe for your body's pain !
Therein you must die, and pass
Into dust, without hope of gain.

From the weary feet's toiling to spring
To oblivion, and never to know
That the horrible pains of the flesh
You have left in the body below ;

That He leaves you an heirdom of pain,
And forgets you when dropped from His hand
That had mercy for us ; you would die
In your grief, could you understand.

But the oxen looked up as I spoke,
For a moment in mild surprise,
Then bent again to the yoke,
With peace in their dreaming eyes.

And a small brown bird on her nest
Hid her speckled eggs with care,
Lest one should chill while her mate
Sang high in the golden air.

Still the flower and tree 'neath the sun
Unfolded their buds to bloom ;
And the fly, clad in sombre grey,
Danced over the faint perfume.

And the sun coming forth from a cloud
Shone fair on a smiling land.
I said : Hush, questioning heart ;
'Tis *you* cannot understand.

A CRY IN THE WORLD

KINE, kine, in the meadows, why do you low so piteously ?

High is the grass to your knees and wet with the dew of the morn,

Sweet with the perfume of honey, and breath of the clover blossoms ;

But the sad-eyed kine on the hillside see no joy in the day newborn.

“ Man, man has bereft us and taken our young ones from us ;

Thus we call in the eve, call through night to the break of day,

That they may hear and answer ; so we find no peace in the meadows.

Our hearts are sad with hunger for the love man stole away.”

Bird, bird, on the tree-top, my heart doth sigh for thy music ;

In the glad air of morn and promise of summer, rejoice !

Thy head droops low on thy breast, half hid in thy ruffled feathers,

The grove is lone for thy singing, O bird of the silver voice !

“ Man, man has bereft me, stolen my nestlings from me,

Wrecked the soft home we built 'mid the budding blossoms of spring.

My mate's brown wings grow red in vain beating the bars of her prison ;

With heart so full of longing and mourning, how can I sing ?”

Seal, in the cliff's shadow, why are thine eyes so
mournful ?

Come from the gloom and the echo of the sea's sighs in
the cave,

Sink down into deeper waters 'mid the hidden flowers
of the ocean,

Or seek the splash and sparkle 'neath the snowy break
of the wave.

"Man, man has bereft me, robbed me of those my
loved ones ;

Alone, I find no gladness ; alone, where is joy for me
In the silvery flash of the fish or the wonderful gardens
of coral ?

My eyes grow dim with watching the desolate waste of
the sea !"

Woman, king of the world is the babe you hush with
sobbing,

King of all that is living in air or sea, or on land,
Therefore why do you kiss with lips that are dumb
with sorrow ?

Your tear-drops falling cold have chilled the little
hand.

This is the soul's proud right, the earth given into his
keeping ;

And all that lives thereon must come to his feet a
slave.

Mother, why do you flee with haggard eyes in the
morning,

To answer with white face hid in the grass of a baby's
grave ?

A SINGING BIRD IN THE CITY

GOLDEN-THROATED, hath God sent thee for our comfort
in the city?

Sweet, sweet ! singing, singing all the day.

I said : Ah, the young Spring she will lure him from his
pity,

And he'll seek the sunny distance in the May.

For all the other birds have left us lonely

That sought us when the hungry winter came ;

Quick they forgot, and he remembered only,

But with the breath of Spring he'll fly the same.

For the daffodil is nodding, just awaking,

With a sunny ray imprisoned in its breast ;

Over purple violets the hawthorn buds are breaking—

There a perfect Eden for a nest.

There, I said, the lazy cattle in the sunshine will be
resting,

Dreaming in the pasture lands where summer airs
blow sweet,

Or standing in the river to feel each slow wave cresting

In snowy pearl bracelets around their cloven feet.

But here they gasp and stumble, foot-sore and full of
sorrow ;

No question " Why these sufferings ? " to the careless
passer-by

In their patient weary eyes that shall see no fair to-
morrow,

And find no balm of tears as they stagger on to die.

I said: A feathered choir in the leafy heights are
singing
A farewell to the West where the evening sun dreams
low,
And the passion of their song sets their budding perch
slow swinging,
Till the moon with silver sail glides through the after-
glow.

Here, crimeless prisoners caged, they sigh and dream
for ever
Of a lonely mate in some cool grove that droops
beside her brood ;
They beat the cruel bars in a passionate endeavour
To hush the little voices that call in vain for food.

They dream of autumn colours, the crimson of the
cherries,
The breath of heaven's glory o'er the fields of yellow
corn ;
They sigh for draughts delicious from juicy rowan
berries,
The breath of heaven in the air, so fresh and fair the
morn.

How they rested on the wind or pierced the low clouds
flying
Across the storm-swept heaven, that barred and distant
sky !
Men gave a plot of grass—all earth's wide range deny-
ing—
Scarce large enough to sod them when they die.

I said : Of sight of kingcups and cowslips yellow gleam-
ing,
No avaricious eye will envious loose its hold,
Nor will a greedy hand, where the celandine lies dream-
ing,
Dart hungrily to rob her of her gold.

There is an end of passion—a joy reigns there for ever,
That the storm's great exultation cannot conquer or
displace ;

Here is an end of quiet, and weary hearts rest never,
Lest coming feet should crush them in the passion of
life's race.

There amidst long fern and perfumed breath of
heather

A laughing river wakes far up the mountain-side,
To meet a hundred streams and join their songs
together

As they glance through mead and woodland to meet
the restless tide.

But here the mourning river flows past in sullen
sorrow—

In her shamed desecration she hurries to the sea ;
She hath heard full many cries that sought a great
to-morrow,

Many a desperate soul that curst the laws that be.

Many griefs are covered by her dark mantle flowing,
Many a cold white face lies hidden on her breast ;
With her, men would escape the reaping of their
sowing,

Sad women give their souls for her sweet rest.

I said : When he has heard how hollow is our laughing,
Seen Crime and grey Despair creep hand in hand
with Night,

How Failure spills the cup Ambition fills for quaffing,
How Love is timid, coming to Care's sight.

I said in discontentment : Oh, who hath heart for
singing ?

Go seek some worthier spot for thy sweet lay.
But through the changing summer until bare boughs are
swinging,

He goes singing, singing, singing all the day.

OUT WITH THE WORLD

I'm out with all the world to-day,
So all the world to me is grey,
Ah me ! the bonny world.
Glad birds are building in the tree,
For them I have no sympathy ;
From out the grove a thrush pipes clear,
I have no wish his song to hear ;
From tangled boughs that young buds share
With last year's leaves, a startled hare
A moment peeps and then away ;
I have no laughter for his play,
For all the sunny sky is grey,
The weariest I am to-day
In all the weary world

Perchance to-morrow's hidden store
May bring my heart's content once more,
The sweet young spring comes very fair
With summer's breath and golden air ;
And I may think there cannot be
A maid so blessed on land or sea.
I'm out, though, with the world to-day,
So all the world to me is grey,
Ah me ! the bonny world.

THE SEEKING OF CONTENT

SWEET Content, at the rich man's gate,
Called, "Wilt thou let me in?"
"No! thou art poor and thou art not great,
Hast nothing thy way to win.
Here love is little and mighty is power;
Fate may change in a wayward hour,
A monarch's heart may grow weary of thought.
What if his gold-bringing bees be caught,
Or wake to the fact of their sting?
He has all to lose, if nothing to gain,
And his throne doth lean for support in the main
On the different minds that have crowned him king
In their summer of thinking: so, sorrow
And winter may come with the morrow."

Sweet Content, at the poor man's door,
Called, "May I enter here?"
"No! we bees of the golden store
Are smothered with cold and fear.
We rise ere the sun to delve and moil,
We give our eyes with the midnight oil,
Till the sight burns dim, till the wick's no more,
To buy our masters a coach-and-four,
To spatter us with the mire.
If nothing to lose, we have all to win,
To a heart's despair sin scarce seems sin—
When hope dies out, maybe crime steals in,
And patience may sometime grow sick and tire.
The wearied bee may die on the wing,
Or—God has given to each his sting."

Sweet Content, at Death's black gates,
Called, "Wilt thou take me in?"
"Enter into the home of peace,
Close my gates on good and sin.
Shut on the poor man's rags my door,
Shut on the rich man's coach-and-four.
Nothing had man when life gave him breath,
Nothing he takes past the gates of death
Of the world's unequal paying,
Save only the joys he fought self to resign,
Only the sorrows, he did not repine,
The sins that he stooped for, or passed, and Divine
Is the justice that judges the weighing.
What better reward for a tired life spent,
Than thee for his bride, Content?"

LADY KATHLEEN

FAIR Lady Kathleen in her tower
Bowed her head like a wounded flower ;
She wept the weary night away :
" Here I spin for a year and a day,
But 'tis for love's sweet sake," she said,
" My heart must break and I were dead.
The nettle I've pulled when the moon was bright
And brought it home in the dark of night—
I've trod it soft 'neath my naked feet
To make a cloak for thy rescue, sweet !"
The Lady Kathleen wept full sore :
" Oh, misery mine for a year and more !"

Day after day, and a promised spring
Bloomed into a summer of blossoming.
A thrush was carolling, mad with glee,
On the topmost bough of the rowan-tree ;
He sang to fair Kathleen in her tower,
But the maiden heeded nor bird nor flower.
The daisies white and the sweet wild rose
Clad mead and hedge in their summer snows.
Fair Lady Kathleen wept alway :
" Oh, misery mine for a year and a day !"

A ghostly moon in a steel cold sky,
A dance of leaves by the wind swept by,
Like the mirthless rushing of phantom feet.
But the Lady Kathleen murmured : " Sweet !
Love keeps a woman's summer young."

She sped without fear in the awe of night,
Though the shuddering shadows would stay her flight
With the thought of a horror unknown,
Or a streamlet would laugh 'neath the hedge unshown
But the Lady Kathleen wept no more :
" Oh, joy is mine, for my trial's o'er ! "

To the white thorn-tree on the fairy rath
The Lady Kathleen quick took her path,
Till she stood in the midst of the elfin host,
Like a lily pale or a fair white ghost.
Loud the fairies laughed in their mad retreat,
As she found her love with a whispered " Sweet !
It were no sorrow to lose for you
Youth's golden days or weep long nights through."
But he said : " My love she had golden hair—
Her hands, her feet, they were lily-fair :
So *you* can never be love of mine."

" O Love ! " she cried, " if I am not thine,
My hands grew hard as they wove for thee
The magic cloak that hath set thee free.
My face grew sad, and my hair grew white,
In the silent horror of many a night.
And what shall I now that hope's beacon-glow
Is quenched, and my heart sinks with gloom and woe ?
Thy love," she cried, " be she lily-fair
As the fruit-tree's bloom that may never bear,
Thou hungeredst—to fruit the blossom came :
Thus youth was lost and thus beauty slain.
Thy sweet was fair as the page unwrit
Till Love's strong hand traced his name on it.
Then, O my dear, if thou canst not see
This sorrow cometh from love of thee,
Be blind awhile with a rising tear,
And thou wilt find that thy love is here."
But ah, for woman whose heart is strong
To weary never and love too long !
And what is life to a heart denied ?
Fair Lady Kathleen drooped and died.

CLOUDS

LAUGHTER and song for my cheer,
Life is so fair.
None so happy as I
Anywhere ;
Birds in the woods carol clear,
White clouds in the sky.

Song silent and brow with a frown,
Why is this so ?
Guiltless am I
Would you know,
The lark from the heavens drops down ;
Grey clouds in the sky.

Sighing and tears for my sorrow,
Life is so drear,
None so weary as I,
'Tis a mere
Waste of love, and a wish for to-morrow—
Black night in the sky.

WHEN SUMMER COMES

WHEN summer comes, then you are near to me,
I feel your phantom presence on my heart,
In every wind the dead year speaks again,
And every scene springs up to take its part.

'Twas such a day, as sweet a wind arose,
To kiss with perfumed lips your brown blown hair ;
With brow perplexed and that odd smile you had,
I wondered what you thought of, standing there.

'Twas here I stooped to pluck a drooping flower,
You prayed so foolishly that you might keep ;
And here you turned a moment's space so cold,
I only laughed for fear that I should weep.

O phantom love ! that haunts me restlessly,
That from my passionate hands will ever fly,
Fate owes me this, I will pursue and hold,
Or, finding you but shadow, let me die.

PRE-EXISTENCE

We have met, you and I, long ago,
Yesterday when I saw you I knew,
For the sight of the city was gone,
And the sky took an orient blue ;
Strange flowers and strange perfumes were there,
Strange birds without song flitted by,
O I loved you as woman ne'er loved
When we met long ago, you and I.

We have loved long ago, you and I,
Though to-day we but linger to part.
O say, do you wish to forget ?
Does no answer awake in your heart ?
Perhaps in the future 'tis writ
That we meet once again. Ah, goodbye !
You forget, but I sigh for that past
Where we met and we loved, you and I.

A SUMMER'S DAY

WELL, love, so be it as you say,
Just the hours of a summer's day,
And no sighing for what comes after,
Whether it be tears or laughter.

Take my hand, and we go together
Into love's land of golden weather.
You to be king and I for queen ;
Right royally to reign, I ween.

Cool amber wine in cups of gold
Bring maids, in rosy fingers' hold,
Lip-pledged, but, you'll say ere your drinking,
My kiss were sweeter to your thinking.

And youths shall rob the spring for me
Of all the perfumed flowers that be ;
I'll seek your eyes, and they refusing,
I'll answer only at your choosing.

So, love, your hand, and we away,
Just the hours of a summer's day,
And no weeping for what comes after—
If it be tears, we've had our laughter.

THE AWAKENING

I HAD no culture for my love,
Hungriily my heart cried :
" Knowledge, be my master,
Turn, brain, O faster.
Grind the seeds of wisdom fine,
Till no mind be wise as mine,
At my wit in smiting
Men will smile delighting.
'Tis not too quick for craft, or
Not too keen for laughter."
Wise for love's sweet sake to be
Surely is no vanity.

I had no fairness for my love.
Hungriily my heart cried :
" Beauty, be my handmaid !
Leave me unafraid,
That another glass have shown
Fair a face as hath my own."
So the early morning
Found me still adorning,
Going from the glass with pride,
Coming back unsatisfied.
Vain for love's sweet sake to be
Surely is no vanity.

Lo ! my love was not my love.
Stonily my heart cried :
" Take a fool for master,
Turn, brain, O faster,
While the jingling bells repeat
Much the chaff and little wheat.
Behind a pair of soul-lit eyes
You a soul would fain surprise.
Non ewise as he you ne'er could know,
Because a sweet tongue tells you so.
All his deeds were done before ;
All his thoughts a borrowed store.
Said I, " He is heaven-sent
With his thinking brows so bent,"
This false light that made my day
Was the sun's reflected ray,
Dancing broken on the wave
Of ignorance, nor can I save
One tossing spark of foolish light
To make a beacon for my night.
Blind for love's sweet sake to be,
Seeing is a misery."

A LOST FLOWER

DROOP all the flowers in my garden,
All their fair heads hang low ;
For rose, their fairest companion,
Never again will they know.
Bring me no flowers for wearing,
Take these strange buds away,
For I cannot now have the fairest—
My rose that has died to-day.

What has blighted my blossom ?
Stricken it down with death,
Over the walls of my garden,
What, save the world's cold breath ?
Then bring me no flowers for wearing,
Take these strange buds away,
Since I cannot now have the sweetest—
My rose that has died to-day.

IN WINTRY WEATHER

DEAR, in wintry weather,
How close we crept together !
The storms, with all their thunder,
Could not our fond hands sunder.
No sorrow followed after
Cold words or scornful laughter.
How close we crept together,
Through all the wintry weather !

Dear, when each rose uncurled
To its sweet narrow world,
You went to cull its glory ;
You would not hear my story,
Too sweet the birds were singing,
Too fair the buds were swinging.
If I should come or go
You did not care to know.

When each sweet rose uncurled
To its unknown world,
How could you e'er remember
That in a bleak December,
Through all the bitter weather,
We crept so close together ?

A WAYWARD ROSE

MISCHIEVOUS rose from the rose-tree swaying,
Can I not bind thee nor hold thee ?
Can I not weave thee nor fold thee
In with thy sisters to staying ?
Vain is my passion or praying,
Rose from the rose-tree swaying.

Wayward sweet rose from the rose-tree swinging,
Can I not pass thee, forget thee ?
Can I not see to regret thee ?
In—'mid thy kindred's close ringing,
Out—to my heart she comes winging,
Rose from the rose-tree swinging.

Cruel red rose from the rose-tree swaying,
Ever to worship thee, throne thee,
Never to lose thee or own thee,
Thy beauty to keep me from straying,
Thy thorns for my passionate praying,
Rose from the rose-tree swaying.

LOVE IN MY ARMS LIES SLEEPING

ROSES red for the fair young head to weave a crown,
Let them be half blown,
For a rose in June it will fade too soon to gold and
brown.

For thee my own
The fairest blossoms in all love's land, for that small hot
hand,
And a bird to sing all the sweet day through,
Lest fear should wake in the heart of you,
And I hear my own heart's beating ;
Wild roses red for the fair gold head,
Love in my arms lies sleeping.

Lilies fair for the wind-blown hair,
It were better so
Than a blossom dead,
And a rose's thorn ; but the fresh glad morn brings
breath of snow.
Hath summer fled ?
Hath winter come when I dreamt it spring ?
Is my sweet bird dead that he does not sing ?
I hear but my heart's sad weeping.
Loose and cold is thy soft hands' hold ;
Love in my arms lies sleeping.

AT CHRISTMAS-TIME

FOR that old love I once adored
I deck my halls and spread my board
At Christmas-time.

With all the winter's flowers that grow
I wreathe my room, and mistletoe
Hangs in the gloom of my doorway,
Wherein my dear lost love might stray
When joy bells chime.

What phantom was it entered there
And drunk his wine and took his chair
At Christmas-time ?

With holly boughs and mistletoe
He crowned his head, and at my woe
And tears I shed laughed long and loud ;
"Get back, O phantom ! to thy shroud
When joy bells chime."

A FAIRY PRINCE

PRINCE CHARMING, when the wizard's wand
Had wrecked for aye my fairyland ;
Had razed my castles to the earth,
And killed my child heart with his mirth ;
Then weeds grew rank where flowers had been,
And slow snakes flashed their length between.

Prince Charming, when the darkness came,
With many tears I called your name,
And " Give me back my fairyland ! "
You took me by the willing hand
Ere day had lit the dawn's pale flame ;
You left me when the darkness came.

Prince Charming, spite of wizard's wand,
You said you'd find my fairyland.
I open eyes too sad for tears—
Nought but an open grave appears.

WHO IS HE ?

Who is he, dying so hard ?
Hard is it to die—
Die in the warmth of June,
Bird and bee in tune—
Die in the singing time,
When all the world's in rhyme,
Hard it is to die.

He is Hope lying so low,
Dull it is to lie—
Lie, and the hounds full cry
Gives music to each sigh—
Lie, and the antlered stag
Leaps light from crag to crag.
Weary 'tis to lie.

Is there never a one to weep ?
Weep, for Hope is dead.
Dead, and a body so fair,
Never a woman to care ?
Untuneful is laughter and mirth ;
Hide him, then, under the earth.
Well it were to be dead.

Here comes one weeping so hard :
Woeful 'tis to weep.
Tears on the cheek of youth,
Where smiles should be in truth ;
Tears in the eyes of love.
Angels should weep above,
When the young are sad below.
Better were death than woe ;
Hard it is to weep.

A ROSE WILL FADE

You were always a dreamer, Rose, red Rose,
As you swung on your perfumed spray,
Swinging, and all the world was true,
Swaying, what did it trouble you ?
A rose will fade in a day.

Why did you smile to his face, red Rose,
As he whistled across your way ?
And all the world went mad for you,
All the world it knelt to woo.
A rose will bloom in a day.

I gather your petals, Rose, red Rose,
The petals he threw away.
And all the world derided you ;
Ah ! the world, how well it knew
A rose will fade in a day.

TIME AND THE LADY

HASTE, maiden, haste ! the spray has come to budding,
The dawn creeps o'er the heavens gold and fair.
Come, see the bud ere breaking, the languid day
awaking.

"A moment, Time, until I bind my hair."

Come, maiden, come ! the bud has burst to blossom,
The sun has kissed the earth and found it sweet.
Come, lest you lose, adorning, the beauty of the
morning.

"A moment, Time, a moment, till I eat."

Come, maiden, come ! ripe fruits are on the branches,
The evening star is glowing in the blue ;
The breeze's breath grows colder. Come ere the day
is older !

"A moment till I sip—I'm then with you."

Quick, maiden, quick ! Death's hand has stripped the
leafing ;

Night frees her clouding hair from bonds that keep.
Quick ! lest you're lost for ever, in the gloom to find
me never.

"A moment, Time, a moment, till I sleep."

KING AND FATHER

MOUNTAINS and vales, how ye quake 'neath His tread—
Wake from your slumbers, He calls, O ye dead !
Tremble, great trees, bowing down 'neath His breath ;
Lay by thy scythe, at His bidding, King Death !
The sun in the heavens grows pale at His wrath,
And the stars, at a glance, disappear from their path.
God, at Thy feet, then, awe-stricken we fall—
Lord of the universe, Maker of all !

Earth's secret treasures lie bare to Thy sight,
Nor hidden from Thee the dark deeds of the night ;
The lion grows timid, fawns low at Thy feet ;
The waves from the shore at Thy bidding retreat.
Thou speakest—the monarch's proud ruling is o'er ;
His power and his riches avail him no more,
Endless Thy greatness—of Thee are all things ;
Endless Thy glory, O King of all Kings !

When mountains belched forth their red flames to the
sky,
And Heaven's forked tongues thundered back in
reply ;
When the sun, in his horror, recoiled at the sight,
And earth hid her brow in the darkness of night ;
When stars into dust fell, and vanished in space,
And but man, in his blindness, laughed up in Thy
face—
Endless Thy mercy, Thy strong hand was still—
O Crucified Lord upon Calvary's hill !

Yet, Thou forgettest all, Father above,
Remembering nought but Thine infinite love :
Stretching those wounded Hands out to our aid ;
Telling us tenderly, " Be not afraid ! "
Ready to help us, if only we call—
Nothing too weak for Thee, nothing too small ;
Ready to hear, when we kneel on the sod ;
Thou our Redeemer, our Father, our God !

INNOCENCE

WHITE rose must die all in the youth and beauty of the
year,
Though nightingale should sing the whole night
through,
Though summer breezes woo,
She will not hear.

Too delicate for the sun's kiss so hot and passionate,
Or for the rude caresses of the wind,
She drooped and pined—
They mourned too late.

Birds carol clear :
"Summer has come," they say,
"O joy of living on a summer's day !"
White rose must die all in the youth and beauty of the
year.

THE RAIN

THIS is the rhyme of the rain on the roof,
Tears, all tears, slow falling tears—
If this is the warp, then what is the woof?
Flesh that sorrows and flesh that fears.

Ah ! poor humanity, weeping sore,
Guilt and sorrow, anger and shame,
Oh ! who could peace on this earth restore ?
Who shall punish and who shall blame ?

Here where a God, loved much, was slain.
Since He hath failed, then who can win ?
On the thirsting ground let them fall again,
Tears of sorrow and tears of sin.

THE STORM

THEY say it is the wind in midnight skies
Loud shrieking past the window, that doth make
Each casement shudder with its storm of cries,
And the barred door with pushing shoulder shake.

Ah, no ! ah, no ! It is the souls pass by
Their lot to run from earth to God's high place,
Pursued by each black sin that death let fly
From their sad flesh, to break them in their chase.

They say it is the rain from leaf to leaf
Doth slip, and roll into the thirsting ground,
That where the corn is trampled sheaf by sheaf
The heavy sorrow of the storm is found.

Ah, no ! ah, no ! It is repentant tears
By those let fall who make their direful flight,
And drop by drop the anguish of their fears
Comes down around us all the awful night.

They say that in the lightning-flash and roar
Of clashing clouds the tempest is about,
And draw their chairs the glowing hearth before,
The casement close to shut the danger out.

Ah, no ! The doors of Paradise, they swing
A moment open for a soul nigh spent,
Then come together till the thunder's ring
Leaves us half blinded by God's element.

VALE

GOODBYE, sweet friend, goodbye
And all the world must be
Between my friend and me ;
And nothing is, dear heart,
But hands that meet to part ;
Goodbye, sweet friend, goodbye.

Goodbye, sweet love, goodbye,
And one long grave must be
Between my love and me ;
What comfort there, dear heart,
For hands that meet to part ?
Goodbye, sweet love, goodbye.

FOR EVER

He heard it first upon the lips of love,
And loved it for love's sake ;
A faithful word, that knows nor time nor change,
Nor lone heart-break.

It sung across his heart-strings like a breath
Of Heaven's faithfulness, that whispered " Never
To part, to lose, to linger from your gaze."
She said, " I love forever."

He heard it then upon the lips of death,
Of things that fade and die ;
A word of sorrow never to be stilled,
An ever echoing sigh.

And loneliness within his soul did dwell,
And struck upon his heart-strings, crying " Never
To meet, to have, to hold, to see again."
She said, " Goodbye forever."

THE HEART OF A MAID

In the heart of a rose
Lies the heart of a maid ;
If you be not afraid
You will wear it. Who knows ?

In the pink of its bloom,
Lay your lips to her cheek ;
Since a rose cannot speak,
And you gain the perfume.

If the dew on the leaf
Are the tears from her eyes ;
If she withers and dies,
Why, you have the belief,

That a rose cannot speak,
Though the heart of a maid
In its bosom must fade,
And with fading must break.

THE SCALLOP SHELL

A SCALLOP shell, loosed by the lifting tide,
Had left a friendly shore, the seas to brave ;
Its lips of pink and snowy hollow shone
Pure in the sun, a pearl upon the wave.

It gleamed and passed—you burdened it with love,
With sweet long futures, new and dreamy days :
And named for me—because I held your hopes.
I bid you hush—not meriting your praise.

I pointed, as your vessel came to shore,
Wrecked where the tiny breakers rose and fell ;
And bid your voyagers not put to sea
So frail a craft as this poor scallop shell.

AN ECLIPSE

LET there be an end
And all be done ;
Pass over, fair eclipse,
That hides the sun.

Dear face that shades the light
And shadows me,
Begone, and give me peace,
And set me free.

A MEADOW TRAGEDY

HERE's a meadow full of sunshine
Ripe grasses lush and high ;
There's a reaper on the roadway,
And a lark hangs in the sky.

There's a nest of love enclosing
Three little beaks that cry ;
The reaper's in the meadow
And a lark hangs in the sky.

Here's a mead all full of summer,
And tragedy goes by
With a knife amongst the grasses,
And a song up in the sky.

THE BLOW RETURNED

I STRUCK you once, I do remember well.

Hard on the track of passion sorrow sped,
And swift repentance, weeping for the blow ;

I struck you once—and now you're lying dead !

Now you are gone the blow no longer sleeps

In your forgiveness hushed through all the years ;
But like a phantom haunts me through the dark,
To cry, " You gave your own beloved tears."

Stript now of all excuses, stern and stark,

With all your small transgressings dimmed or fled,
The ghost returns the blow upon my heart.

I struck you once—and now you're lying dead.

WISHES

I wish we could live as the flowers live,
To breathe and to bloom in the summer and sun ;
To slumber and sway in the heart of the night,
And to die when our glory had done.

I wish we could love as the bees love,
To rest or to roam without sorrow or sigh ;
With laughter, when, after the wooer had won,
Love flew with a whispered goodbye.

I wish we could die as the birds die,
To fly and to fall when our beauty was best :
No trammels of time on the years of our face ;
And to leave but an empty nest.

LOVE

DEEP in the moving depths
Of yellow wine,
I swore I'd drown your face,
O love of mine ;
All clad in yellow hue,
So fair to see,
You crouched within my cup
And laughed at me.

Twice o'er a learned page
I turned and tossed,
For would I not forget
The love I lost ?
All stern and robed in gloom,
You read it too ;
I could not see the words—
Saw only you.

Within the hungry chase
I thought to kill
You, love, who haunted thus
Without my will ;
But in the gentle gaze
Of fawn and deer,
Your eyes disarmed my hand,
And shook my spear.

Beneath a maid's dark lash
I swore you'd drown,
Sink in the laughing blue—
Give in, go down :
But no ! you bathèd there
Right joyously,
And from her liquid eyes
You laughed at me.

AN IMPERFECT REVOLUTION

THEY crowded weeping from the teacher's house,
Crying aloud their fear at what he taught,
Old men and young men, wives and maids unwed,
And children screaming in the crowds unsought :
Some to their temples with accustomed feet
Bent—as the oxen go beneath the rod,
To fling themselves before some pictured saint,
“Alas ! God help us if there is no God.”

Some to the bed-side of their dying kind
To clasp with arms afraid to loose their hold ;
Some to a churchyard falling on a grave
To kiss the carven name with lips as cold.
Some watched from break of day into the night.
The flash of birds, the bloom of flower and tree,
The whirling worlds that glimmer in the dark,
All said, “God help us if no God there be.”

Some hid in caves and chattered mad with fear
At the uprising of the patient poor.
“He suffers with you,” no more could they say,
Thus lock with keys of Heaven their bonds secure.
Some called their dead, and then remembering fell
Abusing death and cursed the wormy grave,
And wept for their long hoped-for Paradise,
“God help us if there be no God to save !”

And others sought for right and found it not,
And, seeking duty, found that it was dead,
Blamed their long blameless lives and vowed no more
To sacrifice, for “Might is right” they said.

And pleasure, leaping in the streets with sin,
Caroused through many days till wearily
She tired and met with death in bitter pain.
“Alas ! God help us if no God we gain.”

A few rose up and speaking, “O be strong,”
Were answered, “There’s no reason for your right,”
But many crept in thankfulness for rest
Into the river’s darkness out of sight ;
And others with their limbs deformed, or sore
Seared flesh, shrieked out their patient years of pain,
Crying to Death for their lost plains of Heaven.
“Alas ! God help us if no God we gain.”

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THE DESERTED LOVER

I go through wet spring woods alone,
Through sweet green woods with heart of stone,
My weary foot upon the grass
Falls heavy as I pass.
The cuckoo from the distance cries,
The lark a pilgrim in the skies ;
But all the pleasant spring is drear.
I want you, dear !

I pass the summer meadows by,
The autumn poppies bloom and die ;
I speak alone so bitterly
For no voice answers me.
" O lovers parting by the gate,
O robin singing to your mate,
Plead, plead you well, for she will hear,
' I love you, dear ! ' "

I crouch alone, unsatisfied,
Mourning by winter's fireside.
O Fate, what evil wind you blow.
Must this be so ?
No Southern breezes come to bless,
So conscious of their emptiness
My lonely arms I spread in woe,
I want you so.

A WEEPING CUPID

WHY, Love ! I thought you were gay and fair,
Merry of mien and debonair.
What then means this brow so black,
Whose sullen gloom twin eyes give back,
Poor little god in tears, alack !

Why, Love ! I thought in your smiling cheek
Dainty dimples played hide and seek ;
Passing by like a winter's night,
With stormy sighs from lips all white.
Poor little god, how comes your plight ?

A maiden said you were tall and bold,
With an arm of steel and a heart of gold ;
Whose changing face would make her day ;
When came a frown, the sunshine play
Of smiles would chase the clouds away.

A youth once said you were like a maid
With sunny hair in a golden braid ;
Whose cheeks were each a rose uncurled ;
And brow a lilybell unfurled ;
The fairest maid in all the world.

Why, Love ! I find you so weak and small,
A human child, not a god at all ;
Two angry, sleepy eyes that cry,
Two little hands so soft and shy, 'r
I'll hush you with a lullaby.
Come, Love !

THE SUICIDE'S GRAVE

THIS is the scene of a man's despair, and a soul's release
From the difficult traits of the flesh ; so, it seeking
 peace,
A shot rang out in the night ; death's doors were
 wide ;
And you stood alone, a stranger, and saw inside.

Coward flesh, brave soul, which was it ? One feared
 the world,
The pity of men, or their scorn ; yet carelessly hurled
All on the balance of Chance for a state unknown ;
Fled the laughter of men for the anger of God—alone.

Perhaps when the hot blood streamed on the daisied
 sod,
Poor soul, you were likened to Cain, and you fled from
 God ;
Men say you fought hard for your life, when the deed
 was done ;
But your body would rise no more 'neath this world's
 sun.

I'd choose—should I do the act—such a night as this,
When the sea throws up white arms for the wild wind's
 kiss ;
When the waves shake the shuddering shore with
 their foamy jaws ;
Tear the strand, till slipping pebbles shriek through
 their claws.

The sky is loud with the storm ; not a bird dare span
From here to the mist ; beasts are silent ; yet for a man,
For a soul springing naked to meet its judge, a night
That were as a brother to this poor spirit's long flight,

But he had chosen, they tell me, a dusk so fair
One almost thought there were not such another—
there.

The air was full of the perfume of pines, and the sweet
Sleepy chirp of birds, long the lush soft grass at his
feet.

They say there was dancing too in a house close by,
That they heard the shot just thinking wild birds must
die.

They supped and laughed, went singing the long night
through,
And they danced unknowing the dance of death with
you.

What did you hear when you opened the doors of
death ?

Was it the sob of a thrush, or a slow sweet breath
Of the perfumed air that blew through the doors with
you,

That you fought so hard to regain the world you
knew ?

Or was it a woman's cry that, shrieking into the gloom,
Like a hand that closed on your soul, clutching it from
its doom ?

Was it a mother's call, or the touch of a baby's kiss,
That followed your desperate soul down the black
abyss ?

What did you see—as you stood on the other side—
A strange shy soul amongst souls, did you seek to hide
From the ghosts that were, who judged you upon your
way,

Reckoned your sins against theirs for the judgment day ?

You feared the world, the pity of men or their
scorn,
The movements of fate and the sorrows for which you
were born.
Men's laughter, men's speech, their judging, what was
it to this
Where the eyes of the dead proclaim you have done
amiss ?

Not peace did you gain, perhaps, nor the rest you had
planned,
'Neath the horrible countless eyes that you could not
withstand ?
Or was it, God looked from His throne in a moment's
disdain,
And you shrieked for a trial once more in the height of
your pain ?

Perhaps—but who knows ?—when you struggled so
hard for life's breath,
You saw nothing passing the grave except silence and
death ;
You lay shut in by the four clay walls of your cell,
There the live soul locked up in the stiff dead body's
shell.

Dead, dead and coffin'd, buried beneath the clay,
And still the living soul caged in to wait decay,
For ever alone in night of unlifting gloom
There to think, and think, and think, in the silent
tomb.

Or was it in death's cold land there was no perfume
Of the scented flowers, or lilt of a bird's gay tune ;
No sea there, or no cool of a wind's fresh breath,
No woods, no plains, no dreams, and alas ! no death ?

Was there no life there that man's brain could understand ?

No past, no future, hopes to come, in that strange land ?
No human love, no sleep, no day, no night,
But ever eternal living in eternal light ?

Perhaps the soul thus springing to fill its grave,
Found all the peace and happiness that it could crave ;
All it had lost alone was that poor body's part
Which naught but grey corruption saw for its chart.

Ah well ! for us there ended all one man's life with
this—

A shot, a cry, a struggle, and a fainting woman's kiss ;
Life's blood let 'mid the grasses—and all a world was
lost,
And no one may ever know how he paid the cost.

He is lost in the crowd of the dead, in the night-time of
death,

A name on a stone left to tell that he ever drew breath.
So desperate body die there, with your soul's long
release,

And, unhappy spirit, God grant you Eternity's peace !

DISTANT VOICES

I LEFT my home for travelling ;
Because I heard the strange birds sing
In foreign skies, and felt their wing

Brush past my soul impatiently ;
I saw the bloom on flower and tree
That only grows beyond the sea.

Methought the distant voices spake
More wisdom than near tongues can make ;
I followed—lest my heart should break.

And what is past is past and done.
I dreamt, and here the dream begun :
I saw a salmon in the sun

Leap from the river to the shore—
Ah ! strange mishap, so wounded sore,
To his sweet stream to turn no more.

A bird from 'neath his mother's breast,
Spread his weak wings in vain request ;
Never again to reach his nest.

I saw a blossom bloom too soon
Upon a summer's afternoon ;
'Twill breathe no more beneath the moon.

I woke, warmed 'neath a foreign sky
Where locust blossoms bud and die,
Strange birds called to me flashing by.

And dusky faces passed and woke
The echoes with the words they spoke—
——The same old tales as other folk.

A truce to roaming ! Never more
I'll leave the home I loved of yore.
But strangers meet me at the door.

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I left my home still travelling,
For yet I hear the strange birds sing,
And foreign flowers rare perfumes bring.

I hear a distant voice, more wise
Than others are 'neath foreign skies,
I'll find—perhaps in paradise.

I PRAYED SO EAGERLY

I PRAYED so eagerly,
" Turn and see
How bitter I have striven—
A word and all forgiven."
I prayed so eagerly.

I prayed so eagerly—
Not to be ;
You turned and passed. Goodbye !
Fates smile for me, dreamed I—
Yet I prayed eagerly.

WHEN THE DARK COMES

WHEN the dark comes,
"Is this the end?" I pray;
No answer from the night,
And then once more the day.
I take the world again
Upon my neck and go
Pace with the serious hours.
Since fate will have it so,
Begone, dead man, unclasp
Your hands from round my heart,
I and my burden pass,
You and your peace depart.

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ?

WHAT will you give me, if I will wed ?

“ A golden gown
To come sweetly down,
And deck you from foot to head.”

How will you keep me, if I am cold ?

“ By a heart so warm,
The bravest storm
Dare not force through my strong hands' hold.”

How will you please me, if I should thirst ?

“ Why by the rape
Of the purple grape,
Which the summer and sun have nursed.”

If I should hunger what may I eat ?

“ For you the skies
The falcon flies,
And the hounds on the stag are fleet.”

How can you comfort when fair youth dies,

When the spirit's fain
For a purer gain,
Than the satisfied flesh supplies ?

“ But this I promise, when starved and cold

A lonely soul
Finds for its goal
A six-foot bed and churchyard mould.”

QUESTIONS

WHAT is the secret of your life, browsing ox,
Ox the sweet grass eating ?
Who strung the mighty sinews in your flesh ?
Who set that great heart beating ?

What is the secret of your death, soulless ox,
Ox so patiently waiting ?
Why hath pain wove her net for your brain's anguish ?
If for you Death will gain no life's creating ?

WIRASTRUUA

WIRASTRUUA, wirastrua, woe to me that you are dead !
The corpse has spoken from out his bed.
" Yesternight my burning brain
Throbbled and beat on the strings of pain :
Now I rest, all my dreaming's done,
In the world behind the sun.
Yesterday I toiled full sore,
To-day I ride in a coach and four.
Yesternight in the streets I lay,
To-night with kings, and as good as they."
Wirastrua ! wirastrua ! would I were lying as cold as
you.

BEWARE

I CLOSED my hands upon a moth
And when I drew my palms apart,
Instead of dusty, broken wings,
I found a bleeding human heart.

I crushed my foot upon a worm
That had my garden for its goal,
But when I drew my foot aside
I found a dying human soul.

UNKNOWN IDEAL

WHOSE is the voice that will not let me rest ?
 I hear it speak.
Where is the shore will gratify my quest,
 Show what I seek ?
Not yours, weak Muse, to mimic that far voice,
 With halting tongue ;
No peace, sweet land, to bid my heart rejoice
 Your groves among.

Whose is the loveliness I know is by,
 Yet cannot place ?
Is it perfection of the sea or sky,
 Or human face ?
Not yours, my pencil, to delineate
 The splendid smile !
Blind in the sun, we struggle on with Fate
 That glows the while.

Whose are the feet that pass me, echoing
 On unknown ways ?
Whose are the lips that only part to sing
 Through all my days ?
Not yours, fond youth, to fill mine eager eyes
 Or find that shore
That will not let me rest, nor satisfies
 For evermore.

AN IRISH BLACKBIRD

THIS is my brave singer,
With his beak of gold ;
Now my heart's a captive
In his song's sweet hold.

O, the lark's a rover,
Seeking fields above :
But my serenader
Hath a human love.

" Hark ! " he says, " in winter
Nests are full of snow,
But a truce to wailing,
Summer breezes blow.

" Hush ! " he sings, " with night-time
Phantoms cease to be,
Join your serenader
Piping on his tree."

O, my little lover,
Warble in the blue ;
Wingless must I envy
Skies so wide for you.

A VAGRANT HEART

O to be a woman ! to be left to pique and pine,
When the winds are out and calling to this vagrant
heart of mine.

Whisht ! it whistles at the windows, and how can I be
still ?

There ! the last leaves of the beech-tree go dancing
down the hill.

All the boats at anchor they are plunging to be free—
O to be a sailor, and away across the sea !

When the sky is black with thunder, and the sea is
white with foam,

The grey gulls whirl up shrieking and seek their rocky
home.

Low his boat is lying leeward, how she runs upon the
gale,

As she rises with the billows, nor shakes her dripping
sail.

There is danger on the waters—there is joy where
dangers be—

Alas ! to be a woman and the nomad's heart in me.

Ochone ! to be a woman, only sighing on the shore—

With a soul that finds a passion for each long breaker's
roar,

With a heart that beats as restless as all the winds that
blow—

Thrust a cloth between her fingers, and tell her she
must sew ;

Must join in empty chatter, and calculate with straws—
For the weighing of our neighbour—for the sake of
social laws.

O chatter, chatter, chatter, when to speak is misery,
When silence lies around your heart—and night is on
the sea.

So tired of little fashions that are root of all our strife,
Of all the petty passions that upset the calm of life.
The law of God upon the land shines steady for all
time ;
The laws confused that man has made, have reason not
nor rhyme.

O bird that fights the heavens, and is blown beyond the
shore,

Would you leave your flight and danger for a cage to
fight no more ?

No more the cold of winter, or the hunger of the snow,
Nor the winds that blow you backward from the path
you wish to go ?

Would you leave your world of passion for a home that
knows no riot ?

Would I change my vagrant longings for a heart more
full of quiet ?

No !—for all its dangers, there is joy in danger too :

On, bird, and fight your tempests, and this nomad heart
with you !

The seas that shake and thunder will close our mouths
one day,

The storms that shriek and whistle will blow our
breaths away.

The dust that flies and whitens will mark not where we
trod.

What matters then our judging? we are face to face
with God.

IN A WOOD

HUSH, 'tis thy voice !
No, but a bird upon the bough
Romancing to its mate, but where art thou
To bid my heart rejoice ?

'Tis thy hand, speak !
No, but the branches striking in the wind
Let loose a withered leaf that falls behind,
Blown to my cheek.

Hush, thy footfall !
No, 'tis a streamlet hidden in the fern.
Thus from dawn to dark I wait, I learn
Sorrow is all.

AN EASTERN GOD

I SAW an Eastern God to-day ;
My comrades laughed ; lest I betray
My secret thoughts, I mocked him too.
His many hands (he had no few,
This God of gifts and charity),
The marble face, that smiled on me,
I mocked, and said, " O God unthroned,
Lone exile from the faith you owned,
No priest to bring you sacrifice,
No censer with its breath of spice,
No land to mourn your funeral pyre ;
O King, whose subjects felt your fire,
Now dead, now stone, without a slave,
Unfeared, unloved, you have no grave.
Poor God, who cannot understand !
And what of your fair Eastern land,
What dark brows brushed your dusky feet,
What warm hearts on your marble beat,
With many a prayer unanswered ? "
My comrades laughed and passed. I said,
" If in those lands you wander still,
In spirit, God, and work your will,"
I whispered in the marble ear
So low—because the walls might hear—
The painted lips they smiled at me—
" O guard my love, where'er he be."

SANCTUARY

NEIGHBOUR ! for pity a hound cries on your steps,
With pleading eyes, with sore and weary feet.
Neighbour ! your pity a poor beast doth implore ;
Hunger and cold are busy in the street.
Then, neighbour ! pause ; 'tis no good work you do.
"Off from my door ! I have no place for you."

Neighbour, your mercy ! A heart of love is here,
Within this weary body—love is rare,
And seldom comes to cry before our door.
Then open wide, and take your little share.
Love pleads to be your servant, leal and true.
"Off from my step ! I have no place for you."

From step to step abused, from door to door,
Whipped by the wind, and beaten by the rain,
With hunger at his throat, he passes on ;
Yet One who follows shares the creature's pain.
One follows. Neighbour, stop ! unless you rue.
"Off from my step ! I have no place for you."

The gentle Christ had heard His crying hound,
And left His throne to track the weary feet.
He follows, though unseen, with bleeding heart,
Refused from door to door, from street to street.
Yes, One who follows had refusal too.
"Off from my door ! I have no place for you."

A NEW YEAR

BEHOLD ! a new white world !
The falling snow
Has cloaked the last old year
And bid him go.

To-morrow ! cries the oak
To his lone heart,
My sealed buds shall fling
Their leaves apart.

To-morrow ! pipes the thrush,
And once again
How sweet the nest that long
Was full of rain.

To-morrow ! bleats the sheep,
And one by one
My little lambs shall play
Beneath the sun.

For us, too, let some fair
To-morrow be,
O Thou who weavest threads
Of Destiny !

Thou wast a babe on that
Far Christmas Day,
Let us as children go
Upon Thy way.

So that our hearts grown cold
'Neath time and pain,
With young sweet faith may bloom
All green again ;

That empty promises
Of passing years
Spring into life, and not
Repenting tears ;

So that our deeds upon
The earth may go,
As innocent as lambs,
And pure as snow.

I AM THE WORLD

I AM the song, that rests upon the cloud ;
 I am the sun :
I am the dawn, the day, the hiding shroud,
 When dusk is done.

I am the changing colours of the tree ;
 The flower uncurled :
I am the melancholy of the sea ;
 I am the world.

The other souls that, passing in their place,
 Each in his groove ;
Outstretching hands that chain me and embrace,
 Speak and reprove.

“O atom of that law, by which the earth
 Is poised and whirled ;
Behold ! you hurrying with the crowd assert
 You are the world.”

Am I not one with all the things that be
 Warm in the sun ?
All that my ears can hear, or eyes can see,
 Till all be done.

Of song and shine, of changing leaf apart,
 Of bud uncurled :
With all the senses pulsing at my heart,
 I am the world.

One day the song that drifts upon the wind
 I shall not hear ;
Nor shall the rosy shoots to eyes grown blind
 Again appear.

Deaf, in the dark, I shall arise and throw
 From off my soul
The withered world with all its joy and woe,
 That was my goal.

I shall arise, and like a shooting star
 Slip from my place ;
So lingering see the old world from afar
 Revolve in space.

And know more things than all the wise may know
 Till all be done ;
Till One shall come who, breathing on the stars,
 Blows out the sun.

YOU WILL NOT COME AGAIN

THE green has come to the leafless tree,
The earth brings forth its grain ;
The rose has come for the honey bee :
You will not come again.

The birds have come to the empty nest,
All winter full of rain ;
Music has come where the silence was :
You will not come again.

Love swift will come for the weak lambs' cry ;
Ah for my heart's dull pain !
Lone in the cycle of change am I :
You will not come again.

A LITTLE DOG

A LITTLE dog disturbed my trust in Heaven.
I praised most faithfully
All the great things that be,
Man's pain and pleasure even ;
I said though hard this weighing
Of pains and tears and praying,
He will reward most just.

I said your bitter weeping, man or maid,
Your tears or laughter,
Shall gain a just Hereafter ;
Meet you the will of God then unafraid,
Gird you to your trials, for God's abode
Is open for all sorrow ;
Live for the great to-morrow.
There passed me on the road

A little dog with hungry eyes, and sad
Thin flesh all shivering,
All sore and quivering,
Whining beneath the fell disease he had.
I hurried home and praised God as before
For thus affording
To man rewarding,
The dog was whining outside my door.

I flung it wide, and said, Come enter in,
Outcast of God.
Beneath His rod
You suffer sore, poor beast, that had no sin.

Not at my door then must you cry complaining
Your lot unjust,
But His who thrust
You from His door, your body maiming.

Not mine the pleasure that you bear this pain,
Hurl'd into being
Without hope of freeing
By grief and patience a soul for any gain.
Thus I reproach'd God while I tended
The sores to healing.
A voice stealing
And whispering out of the beast I friended,

Said, " God had quicken'd my flesh, bestowing
Joys without measure,
Made for its pleasure,
An Eden's garden for ever glowing.
Gave me to Man, his care and protection
To gain and to give,
And bid us so live
In united bonds of help and affection.

" Man wreck'd our garden, so we were hurl'd
Out from the skies
Of Paradise
Into the sorrows of a weeping world.
He forgets my care ; I, as God has said,
Give still affection
For that connection
Which into all our bodies life has breathed.

" And why are you abusing God, and praising
With mock effacement
And false abasement
Your own heart's kindness, deeming it amazing
That you should do this duty for my sake,

Which is His bidding,
Nor blame for ridding
Himself of me, your neighbour, he who spake hard
words,
Hard words and drove me forth all sore and ill ? ”

Thus while I tended
This dog I friended
Gave back my faith in Heaven by God's will.

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD

JUST this one day in all the year
Let all be one, let all be dear ;
Wife, husband, child in fond embrace,
And thrust the phantom from its place.
No bitter words, no frowning brow,
Disturb the Christmas festal, now
The skeleton's behind the door.

Nor let the child, with looks askance,
Find out its sad inheritance
From souls that held no happiness
Of home, where love is seldom guest ;
But in his coming years retain
This one sweet night that had no pain ;
The skeleton's behind the door.

In vain you raise the wassail bowl,
And pledge your passion, soul to soul
You hear the sweet bells ring in rhyme,
You wreathe the room for Christmas-time
In vain. The solemn silence falls,
The death-watch ticks within the walls ;
The skeleton taps on the door.

Then let him back into his place,
Let us sit out the old disgrace ;
Nor seek the phantom now to lay
That haunted us through every day ;
For plainer is the ghost ; useless
Is this pretence of happiness ;
The skeleton taps on the door.

THE CHILD

LONE played the child within the magic wood,
Where fountains sang and sunshine ever glowed ;
Half-hid among red roses on his way,
He came at last upon a dark abode.

He knew not sorrow, and when cries came forth
Of bitter grief, he could not choose but stay,
And turned from joyous paths his dancing feet,
To see what wonder in that dim house lay—

Met at the door a woodman stern and cold,
Who looked into the sunshine with blind eyes,
And saw behind him, with a hidden face,
One who made sad the wind with sudden cries.

“ And who are you,” the man looked up and spoke,
“ Who comes thus singing to the home of grief ? ”
“ I am a babe,” the little child replied,
“ Who finds the world all fair beyond belief.”

And at his voice the woman stayed her cries,
And at his laugh she raised her hidden face.
“ Dark is the day and drear the world,” she said,
“ And lives no beauty in this barren place.”

“ Drear is the earth,” the man spoke with a sigh ;
“ Cold is the sun that long has ceased to shine ;
Chill is our house set in a desert place,
And Grief and Sorrow on our hearth repine.”

"I see the roses blossom on the roof,"
The child replied, and raised a wondering gaze ;
"I hear the birds' glad singing in the woods,
The sun shines ever through the long, sweet days."

He laid in each sad grasp his fingers small.
Lo, then, the woman said, "The roses see !
They cling upon the roof like amber rain :
For them the birds do sing a melody."

"And see," the man replied, "how fair the sun
Doth warm the earth into a thousand flowers ;
See the long shadows of the poplars move :
Short is the day that hath such golden hours."

"Will you not stay and teach us to be glad ?"
The woman cried, "we then indeed were blessed."
"I am but little to go forth alone,"
The babe replied, and nestled to her breast.

And so he stayed for many years to play
Beside her hearth, and at each purple eve,
When came the man soft singing from his work,
All full of dreams he could but half believe,

The woman met him on their threshold, spoke
In solemn wonder, with a "Hush !" and "Hark !"
"To-day he drove out Sorrow from the door :
With his small hands he shut her in the dark."

Or, "Go you soft : he slumbers like a bird
That nests, half-singing in his pleasant sleep :
To-day from our hearth-side he thrust out Grief—
This wonder-child did laugh to see her weep."

So stayed the child and played before the door,
And if a rose in languor over-sweet
Would fall upon his way, the woman kissed
The dimpled arches of his little feet ;

Or if a leaf in loving leaned too far
From her high branch, and whirled upon his hair,
The woman ran to break it in her hand
And raise the sunny curl it lit on there.

And oft she kissed his throat all full of song—
Without excuse, to hear his laughter go,
Caught by some echo sung from tree to tree,
Into the distance like a streamlet's flow.

So went the hours until one morn she rose
To find him gone, and sought him all the day,
And when at purple eve the man came home,
All loud with weeping she did stop his way.

"He is not lost," the man said with a smile,
And proud of heart he held her by the hand ;
"He lingers but a little, for his feet
Are on a strange road still in manhood's land."

She looked and saw a youth upon the path,
With axe upon his shoulder, and his eye
All strong and clear to meet the world and fight
A victor's fight, should one his claims deny.

Quick to her side he came with joyous step
To kiss her cheek that was so pale and wan ;
And yet she saw his gaze go past her face,
Some stranger maiden so to rest upon.

But as he stood, the man soft murmuring
Looked, saying slow, "It is my son, my son,
So straight of limb, so comely thus to see ;
Now is the glory of my life begun."

But when the night was still the woman went
Where slept the youth in his small room alone ;
And from a hiding-place a casket drew,
With now a tear, and oft a stifled moan.

And from its perfumed hollow quick she brought
Two little shoes, and held them to her heart,
Stained them with tears, with many kisses cried,
“ O little feet that strayed from me apart !

“ Oh, little child that I shall see no more ! ”
She laid the casket in its hiding-place—
Then bent in prayer above her sleeping son,
Who smiled in dreaming of another face.

THE LONE OF SOUL

THE world has many lovers, but the one
She loves the best is he within whose heart
She but half-reigning queen and mistress is ;
Whose lonely soul for ever stands apart,

Who from her face will ever turn away,
Who but half-hearing listens to her voice,
Whose heart beats to her passion, but whose soul
Within her presence never will rejoice.

What land has let the dreamer from its gates,
What face beloved hides from him away ?
A dreamer outcast from some world of dreams,
He goes for ever lonely on his way.

The wedded body and the single soul,
Beside his mate he shall most mateless stand,
For ever to dream of that unseen face—
For ever to sigh for that enchanted land.

Like a great pine upon some Alpine height,
Torn by the winds and bent beneath the snow,
Half overthrown by icy avalanche,
The lone of soul throughout the world must go.

Alone among his kind he stands alone,
Torn by the passions of his own strange heart,
Stoned by continual wreckage of his dreams,
He in the crowd for ever is apart.

Like the great pine that, rocking no sweet nest,
Swings no young birds to sleep upon the bough,
But where the raven only comes to croak—
“There lives no man more desolate than thou !”

So goes the lone of soul amid the world—
No love upon his breast, with singing, cheers ;
But Sorrow builds her home within his heart,
And, nesting there, will rear her brood of tears.

NEAR THE FORUM OF TRAJAN

IN Rome, as I look from my lattice
And lean to the night,
Where the living sleep, still as the dead are,
All in the sunlight.

The dead are awake 'mid our resting
Beneath the pale moon.
I arise and will walk with their numbers,
Dawn rises so soon.

I hear the bell voices together
Crash into strange sound—
“I, Trajan, am cold” ; “I, Aurelius,
Lie stiff in the ground.”

“Grey Cassius sleeps long, and grim Brutus,
Proud Cæsar is dead” ;
Thus the voices of time in their singing
Roll over my head.

O spirits that throng me and whisper
In desolate street,
O souls that so follow and mock me,
You laugh and repeat :—

“Who is he who shouts into the silence
More lone than us dead,
Who says he would walk with our numbers
With echoing tread ?

“Who would join in a world so immortal
Yet touches no hand,
Why comes he, the child of the sunlight,
To our haunted land ?

“Would he know of our power and ambition,
The worth of it all ?
Let him seek the gold palace of Nero,
And read on its wall.

“Let him look for our loves and desires
In the palace of Kings,
Then bid him go hence with his living
That tortures and stings.

“He is the ghost that would haunt us
With dreams of past light ;
Drive him back to his kind in the sunshine,
And leave us the night.”

AT POMPEII

At Pompeii I heard a woman laugh,
And turned to find the reason of her mirth ;
Saw but the silent figure of a girl
That centuries had mummied into earth :

The running figure of a little maid
With face half-hidden in her shielding arm,
Silent, yet screaming, yea, in ev'ry limb
The cruel torture of her dread alarm.

At Pompeii I heard a maiden shriek
All down the years from out the distant past ;
Blind in the awful darkness still she runs ;
Death in the mould of fear her form has cast.

A little maid once soft and sweet and white,
Full of the morning's hope, and love and joy,
That Nature, moving to the voice of Time,
Shook her dark wings to wither and destroy.

At Pompeii I saw a woman bend
Above this dead, pronounce an epitaph ;
The mother of a child, it may have been.
Oh horrible ! I heard a woman laugh.

HOW LONG WILT THOU LOVE ME?

How long wilt thou love me, O my love ?

“As long as life may be.”

Life is but a breath

Breathed us by Death,

That we may learn and be the makers of our Destiny.

How long wilt thou love me, O beloved ?

“So long shall I love thee, O my love !

As long as time may be.”

Time's but the go and come

Of a clock's pendulum,

Made so we count and see a cycle of Eternity.

How long wilt thou love me, O beloved ?

“So long shall I love thee, O my love !

As long as tears may be.”

Tears may turn to laughter

In the long Hereafter.

Laughter to tears for me, as is in our God's decree.

How long wilt thou love me, O beloved ?

“So long shall I love thee, O my love !

As long as love may be,

Love that can courage give

To the faint heart to live,

To the faint heart Death to see, love that is Eternity,

So long shall I love thee, O my love !”

THE WATCHER IN THE WOOD

DEEP in the wood's recesses cool
I see the fairy dancers glide,
In cloth of gold, in gown of green,
My lord and lady side by side.

But who has hung from leaf to leaf,
From flower to flower, a silken twine—
A cloud of grey that holds the dew
In globes of clear enchanted wine?

Or stretches far from branch to branch,
From thorn to thorn, in diamond rain,
Who caught the cup of crystal pure
And hung so fair the shining chain?

'Tis death, the spider, in his net,
Who lures the dancers as they glide,
In cloth of gold, in gown of green,
My lord and lady side by side.

THE MOTHER

“Ho !” said the child, “how fine the horses go,
With nodding plumes, with measured step and slow
Who rides within this coach, is he not great ?
Some King, I think, for see, he rides in state !”

I turned, and saw a little coffin lie
Half-hid in flowers as the slow steeds went by,
So small a woman’s arms might hold it pressed
As some rare jewel-casket to her breast ;

Or like Pandora’s box with pulsing lid
Where throbbing thoughts must lie for ever hid.
“Why this ? why this ?” comes forth the panting breath,
“And was I born to taste of nought save death ?”

“Ho !” said the child, “how the proud horses shake
Their silver harness till they music make.
Who drives abroad with all this majesty ?
Is it some Prince who fain his world would see ?”

And as I looked I saw through the dim glass
Of one sad coach that all so slow did pass
A woman’s face—a mother’s eyes ablaze
Seize on the child in fierce and famished gaze.

“Death drives,” I said, and drew him in alarm
Within the shelter of my circling arm.
So in my heart cried out a thousand fears,
“A King goes past.” He wondered at my tears.

AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARD

THE little babe I held upon my knee
Had not yet banished from his sleeping eyes
The dreams of some lost world from which he came,
Nor missed some angel-choired paradise.

Strange little soul that claimed me not his own
By glance or smile, but with no seeing gaze
Looked to me who, all timid, dared to call
This wonder mine, and held it in amaze.

I prayed, "When comes the light of consciousness
Of things that be to hold him so he seek
To know what place life now had set him in,
And at whose mercy left, so young and weak,

"Let it be mine, the face he first shall see
Bent on him, full of welcome and of joy,
So that his smile, on thus beholding love,
The pain of coming tears shall half destroy.

"Or if some day he looks to learn, and I
Am not beside, oh ! let it be the sun
Or some fair thing shall greet his seeing eyes,
So he shall find life good and well begun."

Beside the fire I held him close, and sang
Some sweet child ditty, bidding him to sleep,
And broke the log to make it flame and glow ;
Then in his eyes I saw a wonder creep.

Now peeped the soul from out his startled gaze.
"Look first on me," I cried, "my little child !"
But from my kiss he held his face away,
And as the sparks flew up he saw and smiled.

“ IN THE MIDST OF LIFE . . . ”

ALL the long day the robin on the spray
 Piped his sweet song
To her who on her hidden nest
Oft turned beneath her patient breast
Her pretty eggs in tender quest
 All the long day.

All the long day the blossoms on the spray
 Shook 'neath his song.
Kissed by the sun each petal curled
To perfect flower, its bloom unfurled
To fling fine incense to the world
 All the day long.

All the long day there passed me on their way
 A busy throng—
The laden bee to her abode,
The toiling ant who drew her load
Across the danger of the road
 All the day long.

All the long day I heard from far away
 A slow ding-dong ;
Within the vale the village lies,
All still beneath the smiling skies,
Save this sad bell that swings and cries
 All the day long.

THE LOVER

HE walks like one enchanted,
Whose soul is held in thrall,
By some sweet presence haunted
Who passed unseen by all.

He speaks as half-forgetting
The hearers that are by,
He sighs as though regretting
Some dear and soft reply.

It is a lover's rapture,
Naught doth he see or hear,
His heart is held in capture
Unto some mistress dear.

NATURE'S WAY

IF thou didst slip 'neath the encircling wave
And found sure death in coral groves below,
Dost think the sea o'er thy unresting head
Would check one moment of its ebb or flow ?

If thou didst lie 'neath the entombing earth,
Drawn down ere thy allotted sands had run,
Dost think one flower upspringing from the clay
Would pause and droop, refuse to meet the sun ?

If thou wert dead and didst enshrouded lie,
Wept by one heart that hung by thee forlorn,
Dost think at cold or hunger's claiming call
This heart would stay beside thy grave to mourn ?

How small a thing thou art in Nature's plan
To her proved useless, out all careless tossed,
Nor would she let one flower or heartstring break
In grief for thee—who hadst a whole world lost.

THE WANDERERS

Out from her doorway peeped the little maid
To gaze upon the world most full of glee.
Her eager eyes all bright and unafraid,
Her smooth cheek flushed with joy of things to be.

Nor did she stay because long shadows fleet
Did seek the sun for some too slow eclipse ;
She shut the door behind her daring feet,
And hastened forth, a song upon her lips.

Deep in her heart a timid dream's unrest,
A chidden thought not all forbid to stay,
Of how, as from life's fruit she plucked the best,
A splendid knight would ride upon her way.

There was for her no danger in the shade,
No evil in the whisper of the wind,
Out from her home sped forth the little maid,
And closed the door her eager feet behind.

Did you not know her ? Woman, pale of cheek,
Dim-eyed and weary, pray you stop and tell—
The years are long, the grave is far to seek,
Rest you a little—you who knew her well.

The splendid youth—was he but all a dream ?
Came he not forth in armour's bright array,
Fore of the battle did his banner stream,
In eager hand uplifted for the fray ?

There at his gate he stood, the little knight,
For any maid a champion bold and fair,
In benediction lay a shaft of light
Upon his golden helm of silken hair.

He looked into the world, nor feared the shade,
High were his hopes of battles yet to be ;
With his brave eyes he sought them unafraid
And for his watchword hath he purity.

The victor's laurels and the poet's crown,
The singer's lute, the soldier's sword, all won,
All that the world could hold of high renown,
As there he stood a-dreaming in the sun.

Do you remember, elder, sad and grey,
Behind his feet youth's portals clashing fell ?
Worn in life's battle, broken in the fray,
Have you forgotten ?—yet you knew him well.

FOR WHOM ?

“Ach Gott ! wem gehort dieses Haus ?”—*Tyrolese house motto.*

I BUILT a house, four perfect walls and strong,
To hold the kindly roof, whose shelt'ring eave
Did tempt the darting swallows from their flight
To nest and stay all loth and late to leave.
Wide windows, planned to hold the circling sun
Each in its hour—to no fair prospect blind.
Deep hearths to bid the stranger welcome here
To this good house with so much thought design'd.
I built a house that shall the years withstand,
I—who to dust must fall in life's swift race,
As shall he too who tenant follows here—
For whom, then, have I built this pleasant place ?

I set a tree, and with much labour brought
Rich loam about its root, and bent it so
That each young branch, outspreading in the sun,
Reflects in shadow on the sod below.
I oft with care surveyed its slender height
In fear lest blasting wind should bite its green,
And smiled at last to see the timid leaves
In floating pennants where the bud had been.
I set a tree that shall the storms withstand
Nor soon to wither 'neath Time's hand afraid,
I whom the years shall break and overthrow.
For whom, then, have I planned this welcome shade ?

IN ANY GARDEN

Down his long garden he did slowly go,
For fairer sight did each new path disclose ;
Now bent he where the purple asters glow,
Now stayed his feet beside a changing rose.

Like some pale leaf blown by an upward wind,
A butterfly danced in a sunbeam caught,
Then lit upon a lily-bell to find
The honey by some laggard bee forgot.

Upon a mossy step the old dial stood
That told the sunny hours ; he climbed to see.
“ Pass slow, sweet shade,” he said ; “ the world is good,
Yet bless you for the hours that are to be.”

He raised his head : the wind blew back his hair.
He heard the clanging of a distant spade,
And saw an old man in the garden fair,
Who all amongst the flowers a havoc made.

Deep, wide, and dark the digger made his bed,—
A fearful hollow in the pleasant place.
“ Why dig you here ? ” the youth unto him said ;
“ Within this grave what flower would you efface ? ”

And as he called, the digger paused awhile,
And looked upon him with strange eyes, nor spoke.
So that the youth ran forward from the dial,
And with his call the echoing garden woke.

From flower to flower the echo caught the cry ;
The hollyhock let drop its crimson bell :
"For me ! Ah, not for me ! I shall not die"—
The pale rose shook till all her petals fell.

But when the youth reached that green canopy
Where he had watched the digger, there was none,
Nor any grave. There only could he see
The shadow of the yew tree in the sun.

"'Twas but the shade and shaking of your leaf,"
He smiled—then shuddered as he turned away.
It shook in silent merriment—or grief,
With tears or laughter—which, no man can say.

THE HERITAGE

HE on his man-child laid a soothing hand,
And hushed him into slumber, singing, "Sleep !
For thee the world was made and for thee planned.
With this thy heritage, why dost thou weep ?

"For thee the mother bird on her soft nest
Doth turn her speckled eggs with patient care,
And lists until they move beneath her breast,
To break to music in the summer air.

"For thee the flower in the still night lifts up
Her tender buds the drooping dew to stay,
So that each morn she hath a brimming cup
Of perfumed wine to pledge the coming day.

"For thee the beast at thy young feet lets fall
His crimson life, that thou mayst live and grow ;
To hold the earth and all things great and small—
For thee were made the tides to ebb and flow.

"For thee the wondrous earth, so hush thy cries"—
He laid his hand upon the tumbled curls—
"And God's high paradise" ; he sought the skies,
And there despairing saw—unnumbered worlds.

THE QUESTION

Now here is where I fail to understand,
And put my question in all reverence,
On bended knee with head most lowly bent,
To the All-High, All-Knowing Providence.

.

A girl whose fate had left her widowed poor,
With three small babes to shelter and direct,
Rose to the burden, glad in her own strength,
Of those young minds to be sole architect :

Up with the lark and singing with his song,
Of hope and love, watched by her helpless brood,
Toiled in the night when all but she had slept,
And wore her soft hands rough to bring them food.

At each sweet morn she opened wide the door
All to the sun, so that a golden ray
Would pierce the gloom, and like a torch of flame
Light up the bed where her three treasures lay.

Soft would she say, " See God's bright angel come
To bless my babes and chase away the night " :
Then would she bend, all hungry in her love,
To kiss each waking child with new delight.

Each tender body she would robe with pride
And awe unceasing at the beauties shown,
In dimpled limb and cheek and silken hair,
In all the loveliness she called her own.

Then with much laughter would she drive them forth
From her small room until her work was done ;
Where she could watch from out the open door,
And smile upon them playing in the sun.

One golden morn as she drove forth her brood
Of pretty chicks to meet the coming day,
She pointed where a mother thristle clung
With three young birds upon a flow'ry spray.

And as she watched, from the blue air swept down
A hawk, who for a dreadful moment still
Swung in the air, as counting, one, two, three,
Which frightened fledgling he would pounce to kill,

Then struck. She heard the mother's scream of rage,
Who in her wild despair went flying high,
Then dropt again beside the cowering two
That still remained, with sad and piteous cry.

"So death might swoop," the woman said, "on mine."
She kissed each babe and there let fall a tear :
"My little ones, so tender and so weak."
Into her heart there came an endless fear.

Was Hugh too pale, was Una's cheek too red,
Was Kathleen languid in her pretty play ?
"O Lord ! O Father ! keep my darlings safe,"
She held the baby in her arms to pray.

And as she bent her down all full of prayer,
Above the nest that held her pretty brood :
To fold them close with her great mother's love
And fill each little mouth that called for food,

Then did the Hawk a moment hover high
Above the house, and swooping strike to kill
No tender fledgling—ah ! less easy spared,
The mother fell to whet his cruel bill.

And I who passed and found the nest destroyed,
And heard the hungry and affrighted cry
Of each poor babe, beneath Death's cunning blow,
Who struck the whole because the one did die :

“ Wherefore this strange destruction having made,
This contradiction of all Nature's ways ? ”

I put my question to High Providence,
And silent knelt in pity and amaze.

THE ENEMIES

I COULD have sung as sweet as any lark
Who in unfettered skies doth find him blest,
And sings to leaning angels prayer and praise,
For in God's garden the most lowly nest.

But came the cares—a grey and stinging throng
Of liliputian foes, whose thrust and dart
Did blind my eyes and hush my song in tears ;
Their brushing wings flung poison to my heart.

I could have fought, in truth, a goodly fight,
Braved death, nor feared defeat before one foe ;
Against these puny cares I strive in vain,
They sting my soul unto its overthrow.

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